RHYMES OF CHILDHOOD

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

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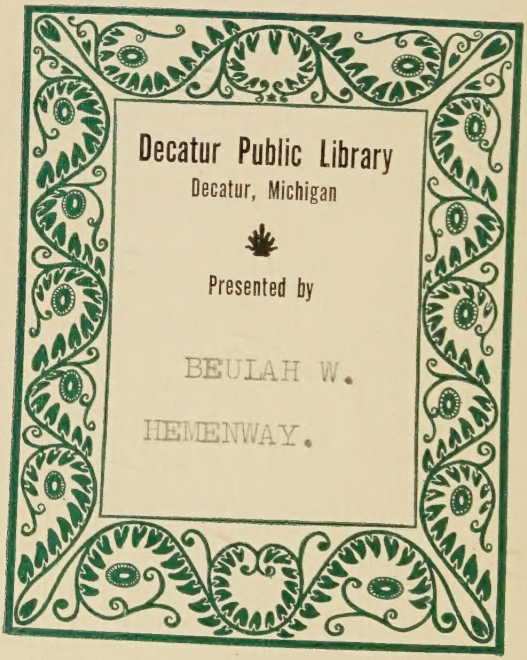

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RHYMES OF CHILDHOOD

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE OLD SWIMMIN'-HOLE
AND 'LEVEN MORE POEMS.

SKETCHES IN PROSE
AND OCCASIONAL VERSES.

AFTERWHILES: DIALECT
AND OTHER POETRY.

PIPES O'PAN: FIVE SKETCHES
AND FIFTY POEMS.

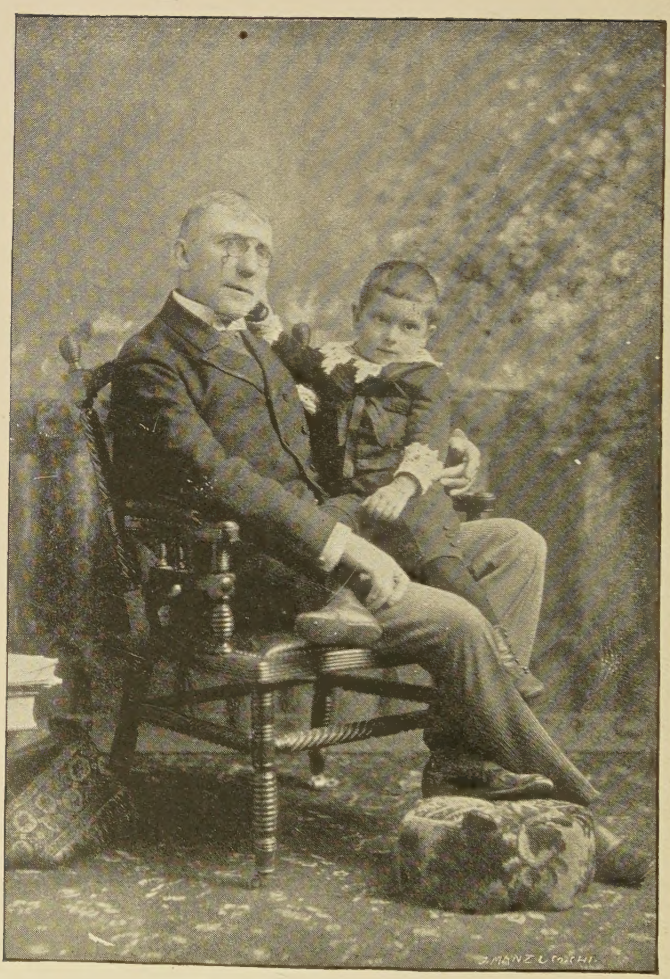
RHYMES OF CHILDHOOD: DIALECT
AND OTHER VERSES.

[The above published by
THE BOWEN-MERRILL CO., Indianapolis.]

IN ENGLAND—

[By LONGMANS, GREEN & CO., London.]

OLD-FASHIONED ROSES:
POEMS DIALECT AND VARIOUS.



Would, as now, we might endure,
Twain as one!

RHYMES OF CHILDHOOD

BY

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

INDIANAPOLIS

THE BOWEN-MERRILL CO

1894

Copyright 1890
by
J. W. Riley

—TO—

THE LITTLE NEPHEW

HENRY EDMUND EITEL

PREFATORY NOTE

IN presenting herein the child dialect upon an equal footing with the proper or more serious English, the conscientious author feels it neither his desire nor province to offer excuse.

Wholly simple and artless, Nature's children oftentimes seem the more engaging for their very defects of speech and general deportment. We need worry very little for their futures since the All-Kind Mother has them in her keep.

It is just and good to give the elegantly trained and educated child a welcome hearing. It is no less just and pleasant to admit his homely but wholesome-hearted little brother to our interest and love.

J. W. R.

CONTENTS

PROEM—The Rider of the Knee

The Raggedy Man 1
The Little-Red-Apple Tree 3
A Boy's Mother 5
The Pixy People 6
Uncle Sidney 9
Pansies 10
Waitin' fer the Cat to Die 11
The Fishing Party 13
Mother Goose 15
The Happy Little Cripple 16
The Days Gone By 19
The Boy Lives on Our Farm 20
The Robins' Other Name 21
To Hattie—On Her Birthday 22
The Lost Kiss 23
Mabel 25
Little Girly-Girl 27
The Runaway Boy 28
Time of Clearer Twitterings 30
On the Sunny Side 33
The All-Golden 35
Longfellow's Love for the Children 37
Winter Fancies 38
The Prayer Perfect 40
A Mother-Song 41
In the Night 42

The Funny Little Fellow 43
Uncle Sidney's Views 46
When Early March Seems Middle May 47
The Nine Little Goblins 49
The Little Coat 51
Our Hired Girl 53
The Dream of The Little Princess 55
The Land of Used-to-Be 58
Who Santa-Claus Wuz 60
When our Baby Died 62
Christine Braibry 63
The Squirtgun Uncle Maked Me 67
A Home-made Fairy-Tale 69
The Youthful Press 71
That-air Young-un 72
Baby's Dying 76
Granny's Come to Our House 77
The Boys 79
The Stepmother. 80
Old Man's Nursery Rhyme 81
The Song of Yesterday 83
Little Orphant Annie 85
Babyhood 88
Max and Jim 89
The Circus-day Parade 90
The Old Hay-mow 92
John Tarkington Jameson 94
Dwainie—A Sprite Song 95
Guineypigs 96
Busch and Tommy 97
Little Mahala Ashcraft 98
Babe Herrick 100
The Land of Thus-and-So 101
Grandfather Squeers 104
The Little Tiny Kickshaw 108

The Lugubrious Whing-Whang 109
Lawyer and Child 111
The South Wind and the Sun 112
The Funniest Thing in the World 119
Cradle Song 120
Little Johnts's Chrismus 121
Down Around the River 125
The Boys' Candidate 127
The Bumble-Bee 128
He Called Her In 129
The Boy-Friend 134
When the World Bu'sts Through 136
A Prospective Glimpse 138
The Old Tramp 139
Curly Locks 140
The Pet Coon 141
A Nonsense Rhyme 143
Naughty Claude 146
The Old, Old Wish 147
The Preacher's Boy 148
An Impetuous Resolve 151
A Sudden Shower 152
The Hunter Boy 154
The Man in the Moon 155
A Child's Home—Long Ago 158
Billy Goodin' 161
A Passing Hail 162
Prior To Miss Belle's Appearance 164
Sprite Serenade 167
A Life-Lesson 169
Honey Dripping From the Comb 170
In Swimming-Time 171
She "Displains" It 174
The Way the Baby Slept 175
The Jolly Miller 176

With the Current 178
A Sleeping Beauty 180
At Aunty's House 182
The Whitheraways 184
Envoy 185

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RHYMES OF CHILDHOOD

THE RIDER OF THE KNEE.

KNIGHTLY Rider of the Knee
Of Proud-prancing Unclery!
Gaily mount, and wave the sign
Of that mastery of thine.

Pat thy steed and turn him free,
Knightly Rider of the Knee!
Sit thy charger as a throne—
Lash him with thy laugh alone:

Sting him only with the spur
Of such wit as may occur,
Knightly Rider of the Knee,
In thy shriek of ecstasy.

Would, as now, we might endure,
Twain as one—thou minature
Ruler, at the rein of me—
Knightly Rider of the Knee!

THE RAGGEDY MAN.

O THE RAGGEDY MAN! He works fer Pa;
An' he's the goodest man ever you saw!
He comes to our house every day,
An' waters the horses, an' feeds 'em hay;
An' he opens the shed—an' we all ist laugh
When he drives out our little old wobble-ly calf;
An' nen—ef our hired girl says he can—
He milks the cow fer 'Lizabuth Ann.—
Aint he a' awful good Raggedy Man?
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

W'y, The Raggedy Man—he's ist so good
He splits the kindlin' an' chops the wood;
An' nen he spades in our garden, too,
An' does most things 'at boys can't do.—
He clumbed clean up in our big tree
An' shooked a' apple down fer me—
An' nother'n', too, fer 'Lizabuth Ann—
An' nother'n', too, fer The Raggedy Man.—
Aint he a' awful kind Raggedy Man?
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

An' The Raggedy Man, he knows most rhymes
An' tells 'em, ef I be good, sometimes:
Knows 'bout Giunts, an' Griffuns, an' Elves,
An' the Squidgicum-Squees 'at swallers therselves!
An', wite by the pump in our pasture-lot,
He showed me the hole 'at the Wunks is got,
'At lives 'way deep in the ground, an' can
Turn into me, er'Lizabuth Ann!
Aint he a funny old Raggedy Man?
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

The Raggedy Man—one time when he
Was makin' a little bow'-n'-orry fer me,
Says "When *you're* big like your Pa is,
Air you go' to keep a fine store like his—
An' be a rich merchunt—an' wear fine clothes?—
Er what *air* you go' to be, goodness knows!"
An' nen he laughed at 'Lizabuth Ann,
An' I says "'M go' to be a Raggedy Man!—
I'm ist go' to be a nice Raggedy Man!"
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

THE LITTLE-RED-APPLE TREE.

THE Little-red-apple Tree!—
O the Little-red-apple Tree!
When I was the little-est bit of a boy,
And you were a boy with me!
The bluebird's flight from the topmost boughs,
And the boys up there—so high
That we rocked over the roof of the house
And whooped as the winds went by!

Ho! The Little-red-apple Tree!
With the garden-beds below,
And the old grape-arbor so welcomely
Hiding the rake and hoe;
Hiding, too, as the sun dripped through
In spatters of wasted gold,
Frank and Amy away from you
And me in the days of old.

The Little-red-apple Tree!—
In the edge of the garden-spot,
Where the apples fell so lavishly
Into the neighbor's lot;—

So do I think of you,
Brother of mine, as the tree,—
Giving the ripest wealth of your love
To the world as well as me.

The Little-red-apple Tree!
Sweet as its juciest fruit
Spanged on the palate spicily,
And rolled o'er the tongue to boot,
Is the memory still and the joy
Of the Little-red-apple Tree,
When I was the little-est bit of a boy
And you were a boy with me!

A BOY'S MOTHER.

MY MOTHER she's so good to me,
Ef I was good as I could be,
I couldn't be as good—no, sir!—
Can't any boy be good as her!

She loves me when I'm glad er sad;
She loves me when I'm good er bad;
An', what's a funniest thing, she says
She loves me when she punishes.

I don't like her to punish me.—
That don't hurt,—but it hurts to see
Her cryin'.—Nen *I* cry; an' nen
We both cry an' be good again.

She loves me when she cuts an' sews
My little cloak an' Sund'y clothes;
An' when my Pa comes home to tea,
She loves him most as much as me.

She laughs an' tells him all I said,
An' grabs me up an' pats my head;
An' I hug *her*, an' hug my Pa
An' love him purt'nigh much as Ma.

THE PIXY PEOPLE.

IT was just a very
Merry fairy dream!—
All the woods were airy
With the gloom and gleam;
Crickets in the clover
Clattered clear and strong,
And the bees droned over
Their old honey-song.

In the mossy passes,
Saucy grasshoppers
Leapt about the grasses
And the thistle-burrs;
And the whispered chuckle
Of the katydid
Shook the honeysuckle
Blossoms where he hid.

Through the breezy mazes
Of the lazy June,
Drowsy with the hazes
Of the dreamy noon,
Little Pixy people
Winged above the walk,
Pouring from the steeple
Of a mullein-stalk.

One—a gallant fellow—
Evidently King,—
Wore a plume of yellow
In a jewelled ring
On a pansy bonnet,
Gold and white and blue,
With the dew still on it,
And the fragrance, too.

One—a dainty lady,—
Evidently Queen—
Wore a gown of shady
Moonshine and green,
With a lace of gleaming
Starlight that sent
All the dewdrops dreaming
Everywhere she went.

One wore a waistcoat
Of roseleaves, out and in,
And one wore a faced-coat
Of tiger-lily-skin;
And one wore a neat coat
Of palest galingale;
And one a tiny street-coat,
And one a swallow-tail.

And Ho! sang the King of them,
And Hey! sang the Queen;
And round and round the ring of them
Went dancing o'er the green;
And Hey! sang the Queen of them,
And Ho! sang the King—
And all that I had seen of them
—Wasn't anything!

It was just a very
Merry fairy dream!—
All the woods were airy
With the gloom and gleam;
Crickets in the clover
Clattered clear and strong,
And the bees droned over
Their old honey-song!

UNCLE SIDNEY.

SOMETIMES, when I bin bad,
An' Pa "corrects" me nen,
An' Uncle Sidney he comes here,
I'm alluz good again;

'Cause Uncle Sidney says,
An' takes me up an' smiles,—
The goodest mens they is aint good
As baddest little childs!

PANSIES.

PANSIES! Pansies! How I love you, pansies!
Jaunty-faced, laughing-lipped and dewy-eyed with glee;
Would my song might blossom out in little five-leaved stanzas
As delicate in fancies
As your beauty is to me!

But my eyes shall smile on you, and my hands enfold you,
Pet, caress, and lift you to the lips that love you so,
That, shut ever in the years that may mildew or mold you,
My fancy shall behold you
Fair as in the long ago.

WAITIN' FER THE CAT TO DIE.

LAWZY! don't I rickollect
That-'air old swing in the lane!
Right and proper, I expect,
Old times *can't* come back again;
But I want to state, ef they
Could come back, and I could say
What *my* pick ud be, 'y jing!
I'd say, Gimme the old swing
'Nunder the old locus'-trees
On the old place, ef you please!—
Danglin' there with half-shet eye,
Waitin' fer the cat to die!

I'd say, Gimme the old gang
Of barefooted, hungry, lean,
Or'n'ry boys you want to hang
When you're growed up twic't as mean!
The old gyarden-patch, the old
Truants, and the stuff we stol'd!
The old stompin'-groun', where we
Wore the grass off, wild and free
As the swoop of the old swing,
Where we us't to climb and cling,
And twist roun', and fight, and lie—
Waitin' fer the cat to die!

'Pears like I 'most allus could
  Swing the highest of the crowd—
Jes sail up there tel I stood
  Downside-up, and screech out loud,—
Ketch my breath, and jes drap back
Fer to let the old swing slack,
Yit my tow-head dippin' still
In the green boughs, and the chill
Up my backbone taperin' down,
With my shadder on the groun'
Slow and slower trailin' by—
Waitin' fer the cat to die!

Now my daughter's little Jane's
  Got a kind o' baby-swing
On the porch, so's when it rains
  She kin play there—little thing!
And I'd limped out t'other day
With my old cheer this-a-way,
Swingin' *her* and rockin' too,
Thinkin' how *I* us't to do
At *her* age, when suddenly,
"Hey, Gran'pap!" she says to me,
"Why you rock so slow?".... Says I,
"Waitin' fer the cat to die!"

THE FISHING PARTY.

WUNST we went a-fishin'—Me
An' my Pa an' Ma all three,
When they was a pic-nic, 'way
Out to Hanch's Woods, one day.

An' they was a crick out there,
Where the fishes is, an' where
Little boys 'taint big an' strong
Better have their folks along!

My Pa he ist fished an' fished!
An' my Ma she said she wished
Me an' her was home; an' Pa
Said he wished so worse'n Ma.

Pa said ef you talk, er say
Anything, er sneeze, er play,
Haint no fish, alive er dead,
Ever go' to bite! he said.

Purt' nigh dark in town when we
Got back home; an' Ma says she,
Now she'll have a fish fer shore!
An' she buyed one at the store.

Nen at supper, Pa he won't
Eat no fish, an' says he don't
Like 'em.—An' he pounded me
When I choked!.....Ma, didn't he?

MOTHER GOOSE.

DEAR Mother Goose! most motherly and dear
Of all good mothers who have laps wherein
We children nestle safest from all sin,—
I cuddle to thy bosom, with no fear
To there confess that, though thy cap be queer,
And thy curls gimblety, and thy cheeks thin,
And though the winkered mole upon thy chin
Tickles thy very nose-tip,—still to hear
The jolly jingles of mine infancy
Crooned by thee, makes mine eager arms, as now,
To twine about thy neck, full tenderly
Drawing the dear old face down, that thy brow
May dip into my purest kiss, and be
Crowned ever with the baby-love of me.

THE HAPPY LITTLE CRIPPLE.

I'M thist a little crippled boy, an' never goin' to grow
An' git a great big man at all!—'cause Aunty told me so.
When I was thist a baby onc't, I falled out of the bed
An' got "The Curv'ture of the Spine"—'at's what the Doctor said.
I never had no Mother nen—fer my Pa runned away
An' dass n't come back here no more—'cause he was drunk one day
An' stobbed a man in thish-ere town, an' could n't pay his fine!
An' nen my Ma she died—an' I got "Curv'ture of the Spine!"

I'm nine years old! An' you can't guess how much I weigh, I bet!—
Last birthday I weighed thirty-three!—An' I weigh thirty yet!
I'm awful little fer my size—I'm purt' nigh littler 'an
Some babies is!—an' neighbors all calls me "The Little Man!"
An' Doc one time he laughed an' said: "I spect, first thing you know,
You'll have a little spike-tail coat an' travel with a show!"
An' nen I laughed—till I looked round an' Aunty was a cry-in'—
Sometimes she acts like that, 'cause I got "Curv'ture of the spine."

I set—while Aunty's washin'—on my little long-leg stool,
An' watch the little boys an' girls 'a-skippin' by to school;
An' I peck on the winder, an' holler out an' say:
"Who wants to fight The Little Man 'at dares you all to-day?"
An, nen the boys climbs on the fence, an' little girls peeks through,
An' they all says: "Cause you're so big, you think we're 'feard o' you!"
An' nen they yell, an' shake their fist at me, like I shake mine—
They're thist in fun, you know, 'cause I got "Curv'ture of the Spine."

At evening, when the ironin's done, an' Aunty's fixed the fire,
An' filled an' lit the lamp, an' trimmed the wick an' turned it higher,
An' fetched the wood all in fer night, an' locked the kitchen door,
An' stuffed the ole crack where the wind blows in up through the floor—
She sets the kittle on the coals, an' biles an' makes the tea,
An' fries the liver an' the mush, an' cooks a egg fer me;
An' sometimes—when I cough so hard—her elderberry wine
Don't go so bad fer little boys with "Curv'ture of the Spine!"

But Aunty's all so childish-like on my account, you see,
I'm 'most afeard she'll be took down—an' 'at's what bothers me !—
'Cause ef my good ole Aunty ever would git sick an' die,
I don't know what she'd do in Heaven—till *I* come, by an' by :—
Fer she's so ust to all my ways, an' ever'thing, you know,
An' no one there like me, to nurse an' worry over so !—
'Cause all the little childerns there's so straight an' strong an' fine,
They's nary angel 'bout the place with "Curv'ture of the Spine!"

NOTE.—The word "thist," as used in foregoing lines, is an occasional childish pronunciation evolved from the word "just"—a word which in child vernacular has manifold supplanters,—such as jus, jes, des, jis, dis, jist, dist, ist, &c. In "thist," as above, sound "th" as in "the."

THE DAYS GONE BY.

O THE days gone by! O the days gone by!
The apples in the orchard, and the pathway through the rye;
The chirrup of the robin, and the whistle of the quail
As he piped across the meadows sweet as any nightingale;
When the bloom was on the clover, and the blue was in the sky,
And my happy heart brimmed over, in the days gone by.

In the days gone by, when my naked feet were tripped
By the honey-suckle tangles where the water-lilies dipped,
And the ripples of the river lipped the moss along the brink
Where the placid-eyed and lazy-footed cattle came to drink,
And the tilting snipe stood fearless of the truant's wayward cry
And the splashing of the swimmer, in the days gone by.

O the days gone by! O the days gone by!
The music of the laughing lip, the lustre of the eye;
The childish faith in fairies, and Aladdin's magic ring—
The simple, soul-reposing, glad belief in everything,—
When life was like a story, holding neither sob nor sigh,
In the golden olden glory of the days gone by.

THE BOY LIVES ON OUR FARM.

THE BOY lives on our Farm, he's not
Afeard o' horses none!
An' he can make 'em lope, er trot,
Er rack, er pace, er run.
Sometimes he drives two horses, when
He comes to town an' brings
A wagon-full o' 'taters nen,
An' roastin'-ears an' things.

Two horses is "a team," he says,—
An' when you drive er hitch,
The right-un's a "near-horse," I guess,
Er "off"—I don't know which.—
The Boy lives on our Farm, he told
Me, too, 'at he can see,
By lookin' at their teeth, how old
A horse is, to a T!

I'd be the gladdest boy alive
Ef I knowed much as that,
An' could stand up like him an' drive,
An' ist push back my hat,
Like he comes skallyhootin' through
Our alley, with one arm
A-wavin' Fare-ye-well! to you—
The Boy lives on our Farm!

THE ROBINS' OTHER NAME.

IN the Orchard-Days, when you
Children look like blossoms, too;
Bessie, with her jaunty ways
And trim poise of head and face,
Must have looked superior
Even to the blossoms,—for
Little Winnie once averred
Bessie looked just like the bird
Tilted on the topmost spray
Of the apple-boughs in May,
With the red breast, and the strong,
Clear, sweet warble of his song.—
"I don't know their name," Win saïd—
"I ist maked a name instead."—
So forever afterwards
We called robins "Bessie-birds."

TO HATTIE—ON HER BIRTHDAY.

[Written in "A Child's Garden of Verses."]

WHEN your "Uncle Jim" was younger,
In the days of childish hunger
For the honey of such verses
As this little book rehearses
In such sweet simplicity,—
Just the simple gift that this is
Would have brimmed his heart with blisses
Sweet as Hattie's sweetest kisses,
On her anniversary.

THE LOST KISS.

I PUT by the half-written poem,
While the pen, idly trailed in my hand,
Writes on,—"Had I words to complete it,
Who'd read it, or who'd understand?"
But the little bare feet on the stairway,
And the faint, smothered laugh in the hall,
And the eerie-low lisp on the silence,
Cry up to me over it all.

So I gather it up—where was broken
The tear-faded thread of my theme,
Telling how, as one night I sat writing,
A fairy broke in on my dream;
A little inquisitive fairy—
My own little girl, with the gold
Of the sun in her hair, and the dewy
Blue eyes of the fairies of old.

'Twas the dear little girl that I scolded—
"For was it a moment like this,"
I said, "when she knew I was busy,
To come romping in for a kiss?—
Come rowdying up from her mother,
And clamoring there at my knee
For 'One 'ittle kiss for my dolly,
And one 'ittle uzzer for me!'"

God pity the heart that repelled her,
And the cold hand that turned her away!
And take, from the lips that denied her,
This answerless prayer of to-day!
Take, Lord, from my mem'ry forever
That pitiful sob of despair,
And the patter and trip of the little bare feet,
And the one piercing cry on the stair!

I put by the half-written poem,
While the pen, idly trailed in my hand,
Writes on, "Had I words to complete it,
Who'd read it, or who'd understand?"
But the little bare feet on the stairway,
And the faint, smothered laugh in the hall,
And the eerie-low lisp on the silence,
Cry up to me over it all.

MABEL.

SWEET little face, so full of slumber now—
Sweet lips unlifted now with any kiss—
Sweet dimpled cheek and chin, and snowy brow,—
What quietude is this?

O speak! Have you forgotten, yesterday,
How gladly you came running to the gate
To meet us in the old familiar way,
So joyous—so elate—

So filled with wildest glee, yet so serene
With innocence of song and childish chat,
With all the dear caresses in between—
Have you forgotten that?

Have you forgotten, knowing gentler charms,
The boisterous love of one you ran to greet
When you last met, who caught you in his arms
And kissed you, in the street?

Not very many days have passed since then,
And yet between that kiss and him there lies
No pathway of return—unless again,
In streets of Paradise,

Your eager feet come twinkling down the gold
Of some bright thoroughfare ethereal,
To meet and greet him there just as of old—
Till then, farewell—farewell.

LITTLE GIRLY-GIRL.

LITTLE Girly-Girl, of you
Still forever I am dreaming.—
Laughing eyes of limpid blue—
Tresses glimmering and gleaming
Like glad waters, running over
Shelving shallows, rimmed with clover,
Trembling where the eddies whirl,
Gurgling, "Little Girly-Girl!"

For your name it came to me
Down the brink of brooks that brought it
Out of Paradise—and we—
Love and I—we, leaning, caught it
From the ripples romping nigh us,
And the bubbles bumping by us
Over shoals of pebbled pearl,
Lilting, "Little Girly-Girl!"

That was long and long ago,
But in memory the tender
Winds of summer-weather blow,
And the roses burst in splendor;
And the meadow's grassy billows
Break in blossoms round the willows
Where the currents curve and curl,
Calling, "Little Girly-Girl!"

THE RUNAWAY BOY.

WUNST I sassed my Pa, an' he
Won't stand that, an' punished me,—
Nen when he was gone that day,
I slipped out an' runned away.

I tooked all my copper-cents,
An' clumbed over our back fence
In the jimpson-weeds 'at growed
Ever'where all down the road.

Nen I got out there, an' nen
I runned some—an' runned again
When I met a man 'at led
A big cow 'at shooked her head.

I went down a long, long lane
Where was little pigs a-play'n';
An' a grea'-big pig went "Booh!"
An' jumped up, an' skeered me too.

Nen I scampered past, an' they
Was somebody hollered "Hey!"
An' I ist looked ever'where,
An' they was nobody there.

I *Want* to, but I'm 'fraid to try
To go back....An' by-an' -by,
Somepin' hurts my throat inside—
An' I want my Ma—an' cried.

Nen a grea'-big girl come through
Where's a gate, an' telled me who
Am I? an' ef I tell where
My home's at she'll show me there.

But I couldn't ist but tell
What's my *name*; an' she says well,
An' she tooked me up an' says
She know where I live, she guess.

Nen she telled me hug wite close
Round her neck!—an' off she goes
Skippin' up the street! An' nen
Purty soon I'm home again.

An' my Ma, when she kissed me,
Kissed the *big girl* too, an' *she*
Kissed me—ef I p'omise *shore*
I won't run away no more!

TIME OF CLEARER TWITTERINGS.

I.

TIME of crisp and tawny leaves,
And of tarnished harvest sheaves,
And of dusty grasses—weeds—
Thistles, with their tufted seeds
Voyaging the Autumn breeze
Like as fairy argosies:
Time of quicker flash of wings,
And of clearer twitterings
In the grove, or deeper shade
Of the tangled everglade,—
Where the spotted water-snake
Coils him in the sunniest brake;
And the bittern, as in fright,
Darts, in sudden, slanting flight,
Southward, while the startled crane
Films his eyes in dreams again.

II.

Down along the dwindled creek
We go loitering. We speak
Only with old questionings
Of the dear remembered things
Of the days of long ago,
When the stream seemed thus and so

In our boyish eyes:—The bank
Greener then, through rank on rank
Of the mottled sycamores,
Touching tops across the shores:
Here, the hazel thicket stood—
There, the almost pathless wood
Where the shellbark hickory tree
Rained its wealth on you and me.
Autumn! as you loved us then,
Take us to your heart again!

III.

Season halest of the year!
How the zestful atmosphere
Nettles blood and brain, and smites
Into life the old delights
We have wasted in our youth,
And our graver years, forsooth!
How again the boyish heart
Leaps to see the chipmunk start
From the brush and sleek the sun's
Very beauty, as he runs!
How again a subtle hint
Of crushed pennyroyal or mint,
Sends us on our knees, as when
We were truant boys of ten—
Brown marauders of the wood,
Merrier than Robin Hood!

IV.

Ah! will any minstrel say,
In his sweetest roundelay,
What is sweeter, after all,
Than black haws, in early Fall—
Fruit so sweet the frost first sat,
Dainty-toothed, and nibbled at!
And will any poet sing
Of a lusher, richer thing
Than a ripe Mayapple, rolled
Like a pulpy lump of gold
Under thumb and finger-tips,
And poured molten through the lips.
Go, ye bards of classic themes,
Pipe your songs by classic streams!
I would twang the redbird's wings
In the thicket while he sings!

ON THE SUNNY SIDE.

HI and whoop-hooray, boys!
Sing a song of cheer!
Here's a holiday, boys,
Lasting half a year!
Round the world, and half is
Shadow we have tried;
Now we're where the laugh is,—
On the sunny side!

Pigeons coo and mutter,
Strutting high aloof
Where the sunbeams flutter
Through the stable roof.
Hear the chickens cheep, boys,
And the hen with pride
Clucking them to sleep, boys,
On the sunny side!

Hear the clacking guinea;
Hear the cattle moo;
Hear the horses whinny,
Looking out at you!

On the hitching-block, boys,
Grandly satisfied,
See the old peacock, boys,
On the sunny side!

Robins in the peach-tree;
Bluebirds in the pear;
Blossoms over each tree
In the orchard there!
All the world's in joy, boys,
Glad and glorified
As a romping boy, boys,
On the sunny side!

Where's a heart as mellow?
Where's a soul as free?
Where is any fellow
We would rather be?
Just ourselves or none, boys,
World around and wide,
Laughing in the sun boys,
On the sunny side!

THE ALL-GOLDEN.

I.

THROUGH every happy line I sing
I feel the tonic of the Spring.
The day is like an old-time face
That gleams across some grassy place—
An old-time face—an old-time chum
Who rises from the grave to come
And lure me back along the ways
Of time's all-golden yesterdays.
Sweet day! to thus remind me of
The truant boy I used to love—
To set, once more, his finger-tips
Against the blossom of his lips,
And pipe for me the signal known
By none but him and me alone!

II.

I see, across the school-room floor
The shadow of the open door,
And dancing dust and sunshine blent
Slanting the way the morning went,
And beckoning my thoughts afar
Where reeds and running waters are;
Where amber-colored bayous glass

The half drowned weeds and wisps of grass;
Where sprawling frogs, in loveless key,
Sing on and on incessantly.
Against the green woods dim expanse
The cat-tail tilts its tufted lance,
While on its tip—one might declare
The white "snakefeeder" blossomed there!

III.

I catch my breath, as children do
In woodland swings when life is new,
And all the blood is warm as wine
And tingles with a tang divine.
My soul soars up the atmosphere
And sings aloud where God can hear;
And all my being leans intent
To mark His smiling wonderment.
O gracious dream, and gracious time,
And gracious theme, and gracious rhyme—
When buds of Spring begin to blow
In blossoms that we used to know,
And lure us back along the ways
Of time's all-golden yesterdays!

LONGFELLOW'S LOVE FOR THE CHILDREN.

AWAKE, he loved their voices,
And wove them into his rhyme;
And the music of their laughter
Was with him all the time.

Though he knew the tongues of nations,
And their meanings all were dear,
The prattle and lisp of a little child
Was the sweetest for him to hear.

WINTER FANCIES.

I.

WINTER without
And warmth within;
The winds may shout
And the storm begin;
The snows may pack
At the window pane,
And the skies grow black,
And the sun remain
Hidden away
The livelong day—
But here—in here is the warmth of May!

II.

Swoop your spitefullest
Up the flue,
Wild Winds—do!
What in the world do I care for you?
O delightfullest
Weather of all,
Howl and squall,
And shake the trees till the last leaves fall!

III.

The joy one feels,
In an easy chair,
Cocking his heels
In the dancing air
That wreathes the rim of a roaring stove
Whose heat loves better than hearts can love,
Will not permit
The coldest day
To drive away
The fire in his blood, and the bliss of it!

IV.

Then blow, Winds, blow!
And rave and shriek,
And snarl and snow
Till your breath grows weak—
While here in my room
I'm as snugly shut
As a glad little worm
In the heart of a nut!

THE PRAYER PERFECT.

DEAR Lord! kind Lord!
Gracious Lord! I pray
Thou wilt look on all I love,
Tenderly to-day!
Weed their hearts of weariness;
Scatter every care
Down a wake of angel-wings
Winnowing the air.

Bring unto the sorrowing
All release from pain;
Let the lips of laughter
Overflow again;
And with all the needy
O divide, I pray,
This vast treasure of content
That is mine to-day!

A MOTHER-SONG.

MOTHER, O mother! forever I cry for you,
Sing the old song I may never forget;
Even in slumber I murmur and sigh for you.—
Mother, O mother,
Sing low "Little brother,
Sleep, for thy mother bends over thee yet!"

Mother, O mother! the years are so lonely,
Filled but with weariness, doubt and regret!
Can't you come back to me—for to-night only,
Mother, my mother,
And sing, "Little brother,
Sleep, for thy mother bends over thee yet!"

Mother, O mother! of old I had never
One wish denied me, nor trouble to fret;
Now—must I cry out all vainly forever,—
Mother, sweet mother,
O sing, "Little brother,
Sleep, for thy mother bends over thee yet!"

Mother, O mother! must longing and sorrow
Leave me in darkness, with eyes ever wet,
And never the hope of a meeting to-morrow?
Answer me, mother,
And sing, "Little brother,
Sleep, for thy mother bends over thee yet!"

IN THE NIGHT.

WHEN it's night, and no light, too,
Wakin' by yourself,
With the old clock mockin' you
On the mantel shelf;
In the dark—so still and black,
You're afeard you'll hear
Somepin' awful pop and crack,—
"Go to sleep, my dear!"

That's what *Mother* says,—And *then's*
When we aint afeard!
Wunder, when we be big mens,
Then 'ul we be skeerd?—
Some night Mother's goned away,
And ist *us* is here,
Will The Good Man wake and say
"Go to sleep my dear?"

THE FUNNY LITTLE FELLOW.

'TWAS a Funny Little Fellow
Of the very purest type,
For he had a heart as mellow
As an apple over-ripe;
And the brightest little twinkle
When a funny thing occurred,
And the lightest little tinkle
Of a laugh you ever heard!

His smile was like the glitter
Of the sun in tropic lands, '
And his talk a sweeter twitter
Than the swallow understands;
Hear him sing—and tell a story—
Snap a joke—ignite a pun,—
'Twas a capture—rapture—glory,
And explosion—all in one!

Though he hadn't any money—
That condiment which tends
To make a fellow "honey"
For the palate of his friends;—
Sweet simples he compounded—
Sovereign antidotes for sin
Or taint,—a faith unbounded
That his friends were genuine.

He was'nt honored, may be—
For his songs of praise were slim,—
Yet I never knew a baby
That wouldn't crow for him;
I never knew a mother
But urged a kindly claim
Upon him as a brother,
At the mention of his name.

The sick have ceased their sighing,
And have even found the grace
Of a smile when they were dying
As they looked upon his face;
And I've seen his eyes of laughter
Melt in tears that only ran
As though, swift-dancing after,
Came the Funny Little Man.

He laughed away the sorrow,
And he laughed away the gloom
We are all so prone to borrow
From the darkness of the tomb;
And he laughed across the ocean
Of a happy life, and passed,
With a laugh of glad emotion,
Into Paradise at last.

And I think the Angels knew him,
And had gathered to await
His coming, and run to him
Through the widely-opened Gate—
With their faces gleaming sunny
For his laughter-loving sake,
And thinking, "What a funny
Little Angel he will make!"

UNCLE SIDNEY'S VIEWS.

I HOLD that the true age of wisdom is when
We are boys and girls, and not women and men,—
When as credulous children we *know* things because
We *believe* them—however averse to the laws.
It is *faith*, then, not science and reason, I say,
That is genuine wisdom.—And would that to-day
We as then, were as wise and ineffably blest
As to live, love and die, and trust God for the rest.

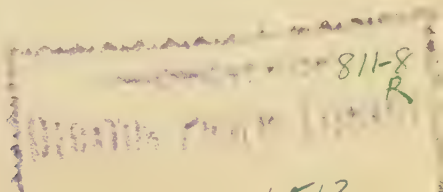
So I simply deny the old notion, you know,
That the wiser we get as the older we grow!—
For *in youth* all we know we are *certain* of.—*Now*
The greater our knowledge, the more we allow
For skeptical margin.—And hence I regret
That the world isn't flat, and the sun doesn't set,
And we may not go creeping up home, when we die,
Through the moon, like a round yellow hole in the sky.

WHEN EARLY MARCH SEEMS MIDDLE MAY.

WHEN country roads begin to thaw
In mottled spots of damp and dust,
And fences by the margin draw
Along the frosty crust
Their graphic silhouettes, I say,
The Spring is coming round this way.

When morning-time is bright with sun
And keen with wind, and both confuse
The dancing, glancing eyes of one
With tears that ooze and ooze—
And nose-tips weep as well as they,
The Spring is coming round this way.

When suddenly some shadow-bird
Goes wavering beneath the gaze,
And through the hedge the moan is heard
Of kine that fain would graze
In grasses new, I smile and say,
The Spring is coming round this way.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When knotted horse-tails are untied,
And teamsters whistle here and there,
And clumsy mitts are laid aside,
And choppers' hands are bare,
And chips are thick where children play,
The Spring is coming round this way.

When through the twigs the farmer tramps,
And troughs are chunked beneath the trees,
And fragrant hints of sugar-camps
Astray in every breeze,
And early March seems middle-May,
The Spring is coming round this way.

When coughs are changed to laughs, and when
Our frowns melt into smiles of glee,
And all our blood thaws out again
In streams of ecstasy,
And poets wreak their roundelay,
The Spring is coming round this way.

THE NINE LITTLE GOBLINS.

THEY all climbed up on a high board fence—
Nine little goblins, with green-glass eyes—
Nine little goblins that had no sense,
And couldn't tell coppers from cold mince pies;
And they all climbed up on the fence, and sat–
And I asked them what they were staring at.

And the first one said, as he scratched his head
With a queer little arm that reached out of his ear
And rasped its claws in his hair so red—
"This is what this little arm is fer!"
And he scratched and stared, and the next one said,
"How on earth do *you* scratch your head?"

And he laughed like the screech of a rusty hinge—
Laughed and laughed till his face grew black;
And when he choked, with a final twinge
Of his stifling laughter, he thumped his back
With a fist that grew on the end of his tail
Till the breath came back to his lips so pale.

And the third little goblin leered round at me—
And there were no lids on his eyes at all—
And he clucked one eye, and he says, says he,
"What is the style of your socks this fall?"
And he clapped his heels—and I sighed to see
That he had hands where his feet should be.

Then a bald-faced goblin, gray and grim,
Bowed his head, and I saw him slip
His eyebrows off, as I looked at him,
And paste them over his upper lip;
And then he moaned in remorseful pain—
"Would—Ah, would I'd me brows again!"

And then the whole of the goblin band
Rocked on the fence-top to and fro,
And clung, in a long row, hand in hand,
Singing the songs that they used to know—
Singing the songs that their grandsires sung
In the goo-goo days of the goblin-tongue.

And ever they kept their green-glass eyes
Fixed on me with a stony stare—
Till my own grew glazed with a dread surmise,
And my hat whooped up on my lifted hair,
And I felt the heart in my breast snap to,
As you've heard the lid of a snuff-box do.

And they sang "You're asleep! There is no board fence,
And never a goblin with green-glass eyes!—
'Tis only a vision the mind invents
After a supper of cold mince pies.—
And you're doomed to dream this way," they said,—
"*And you sha'nt wake up till you're clean plum dead!*"

THE LITTLE COAT.

HERE'S his ragged "roundabout"...
Turn the pockets inside out:
See; his pen-knife, lost to use,
Rusted shut with apple-juice;
Here, with marbles, top and string,
Is his deadly "devil-sling,"
With its rubber, limp at last
As the sparrows of the past!
Beeswax—buckles—leather straps—
Bullets, and a box of caps,—
Not a thing of all, I guess,
But betrays some waywardness—
E'en these tickets, blue and red,
For the Bible-verses said—
Such as this his mem'ry kept—
"Jesus wept."

Here's a fishing hook-and-line,
Tangled up with wire and twine,
And dead angle-worms, and some
Slugs of lead and chewing gum,
Blent with scents that can but come
From the oil of rhodium.
Here— a soiled, yet dainty note,
That some little sweetheart wrote,

Dotting—"Vine grows round the stump,"
And—"My sweetest sugar lump!"
Wrapped in this—a padlock key
Where he's filed a touch-hole—see!
And some powder in a quill
Corked up with a liver pill;
And a spongy little chunk
Of "punk."

Here's the little coat—but O!
Where is he we've censured so!
Don't you hear us calling, dear?
Back! come back, and never fear.—
You may wander where you will,
Over orchard, field and hill;
You may kill the birds, or do
Anything that pleases you!
Ah, this empty coat of his!
Every tatter worth a kiss;
Every stain as pure instead
As the white stars overhead:
And the pockets—homes were they
Of the little hands that play
Now no more—but, absent, thus
Beckon us.

OUR HIRED GIRL.

OUR hired girl, she's 'Lizabuth Ann;
An' she can cook best things to eat!
She ist puts dough in our pie-pan,
An' pours in somepin' 'at's good and sweet,
An' nen she salts it all on top
With cinnamon; an' nen she'll stop
An' stoop an' slide it, ist as slow,
In th'old cook-stove, so's 'two'nt slop
An' git all spilled; nen bakes it, so
It's custard pie, first thing you know!
An' nen she'll say:
"Clear out o' my way!
They's time fer work, an' time fer play!—
Take yer dough, an' run, child; run!
Er I cain't git no cookin' done!"

When our hired girl 'tends like she's mad,
An' says folks got to walk the chalk
When *she's* around, er wisht they had,
I play out on our porch an' talk
To th' Raggedy Man 'at mows our lawn;
An' he says "*Whew*!" an' nen leans on
His old crook-scythe, and blinks his eyes

An' sniffs all round an' says,—"I swawn!
Ef my old nose don't tell me lies,
It 'pears like I smell custard-pies!"
An' nen *he'll* say,—
" 'Clear out o' my way!
They's time fer work an' time fer play!
Take yer dough, an' run, Child; run!
Er *she* cain't git no cookin' done!' "

Wunst our hired girl, when she
Got the supper, an' we all et,
An' it was night, an' Ma an' me
An' Pa went wher' the "Social" met,—
An' nen when we come home, an' see
A light in the kitchen-door, an' we
Heerd a maccordeun, Pa says "Lan'-
O'-Gracious! who can *her* beau be?"
An' I marched in, an' 'Lizabuth Ann
Wuz parchin' corn fer the Raggedy Man!
Better say
"Clear out o' the way!
They's time fer work, an' time fer play!
Take the hint, an' run, Child; run!
Er we cain't git no *courtin'* done!"

THE DREAM OF THE LITTLE PRINCESS.

'TWAS a curious dream, good sooth!—
The dream of The Little Princess;
It seemed a dream yet a truth,
Long years ago in her youth.—
It *came* as a dream—no less
It was *not* a dream, she says.

(She is singing and saying things
Musical as the wile
Of the eerie quaverings
That drip from the grievéd strings
Of her lute.—We weep or smile
Even as she, meanwhile.)

In a day, long dead and gone,
When her castle-turrets threw
Their long, sharp shadows on
The sward like lances,—wan
And lone, she strayed into
Strange grounds where lilies grew.

There, late in the afternoon,
As she sate in the terrace shade,
Rav'ling a half-spun tune
From a lute like a wee new-moon,—
High off was a bugle played,
And a sound as of steeds that neighed.

And the lute fell from her hands,
As her eyes raised, half in doubt,
To the arch of the azure lands
Where lo! with the fluttering strands
Of a rainbow reined about
His wrist, rode a horseman out.

And the Little Princess was stirred
No less at his steeds than him;—
A jet-black span of them gird
In advance, he bestrode the third;
And the troop of them seemed to swim
The skies as the Seraphim.

Wingless they were, yet so
Upborne in their wondrous flight—
As their master bade them go,
They dwindled on high; or lo!
They curved from their heavenmost height
And swooped to her level sight.

And the eyes of The Little Princess
Grow O so bright as the chants
Of the horseman's courtliness,—
Saluting her low—Ah, yes!
And lifting a voice that haunts
Her own song's weird romance.

For (she sings) at last he swept
As near to her as the tips
Of the lilies, that whitely slept,
As he leant o'er one and wept
And touched it with his lips—
Sweeter than honey-drips!

And she keeps the lily yet—
As the horseman bade, (she says)
As he launched, with a wild curvet,
His steeds toward the far sunset,
Till gulfed in its gorgeousness
And lost to The Little Princess:

But O, my master sweet!
He is coming again! (she sings)
My Prince of the Coursers fleet,
With his bugle's echoings,
And the breath of his voice for the wings
Of the sandals of his feet!

THE LAND OF USED-TO-BE.

AND where's the land of Used-to-be, does little baby wonder?
Oh, we will clap a magic saddle over "Popy's" knee,
And ride away around the world, and in and out and under
The whole of all the golden sunny Summer-time and see!

Leisurely and lazy-like we'll jostle on our journey,
And let the pony bathe his hooves and cool them in the dew,
As he sidles down the shady way, and lags along the ferny
And green grassy edges of the lane we travel through.

And then we'll canter on to catch the bubble of the thistle
As it bumps among the butterflies and glimmers down the sun,
To leave us laughing all content to hear the robin whistle
Or guess what Katydid is saying little Katy's done.

And pausing here a minute, where we hear the squirrel chuckle,
As he darts from out the underbrush and scampers up the tree,
We will gather buds and locust-blossoms, leaves and honeysuckle,
To wreathe around our foreheads, riding into Used-to be;

For here's the very rim of it that we go swinging over—
Don't you hear the Fairy bugles, and the tinkle of the bells,
And see the baby-bumble-bees that tumble in the clover,
And dangle from the tilted pinks and tipsy pimpernels?

And don't you see the merry faces of the daffodillies,
And the jolly Johnny-jump-ups, and the butter-cups a-glee,
And the low, lolling ripples ring around the water-lilies?—
All greeting us with laughter, to the Land of Used-to-be!

And here among the blossoms of the blooming vines and grasses,
With a haze forever hanging in the sky forever blue,
And with a breeze from over seas to kiss us as it passes,
We will romp around forever as the airy Elfins do!

For all the elves of earth and air are swarming here together—
The prankish Puck, King Oberon, and Queen Titania too;
And dear old Mother Goose herself, as sunny as the weather,
Comes dancing down the dewy walks to welcome me and you!

WHO SANTY-CLAUS WUZ.

JES' a little bit o' feller—I remember still—
Ust to almost cry fer Christmas, like a youngster will.
Fourth o' July's nothin' to it!—New Year's ain't a smell!
Easter-Sunday—Circus-day—jes' all dead in the shell!
Lawzy, though! at night, you know, to set around an' hear
The old folks work the story off about the sledge an' deer,
An' "Santy" skootin' round the roof, all wrapt in fur an' fuzz—
Long afore
I knowed who
"Santy-Claus" wuz!

Ust to wait, an' set up late, a week er two ahead;
Couldn't hardly keep awake, ner wouldn't go to bed;
Kittle stewin' on the fire, an' Mother settin' here
Darnin' socks, an' rockin' in the skreeky rockin'-cheer;
Pap gap', an' wonder where it wuz the money went,
An' quar'l with his frosted heels, an' spill his liniment;
An' me a-dreamin' sleigh-bells when the clock 'ud whir an' buzz,
Long afore
I knowed who
"Santy-Claus" wuz!

Size the fire-place up an' figger how "Ole Santy" could
Manage to come down the chimbly, like they said he would;
Wisht 'at I could hide an' see him—wunderd what he'd say
Ef he ketched a feller layin' fer him thataway!
But I *bet* on him, an' *liked* him, same as ef he had
Turned to pat me on the back an' say, "Look here, my lad,
Here's my pack,— jes' he'p yourse'f, like all good boys does!"
Long afore
I knowed who
"Santy-Claus" wuz!

Wisht that yarn was true about him, as it 'peared to be—
Truth made out o' lies like that-un's good enough fer me!—
Wisht I still wuz so confidin' I could jes' go wild
Over hangin' up my stockin's, like the little child
Climbin' in my lap to-night, an' beggin' me to tell
'Bout them reindeers, and "Old Santy" that she loves so well
I'm half sorry fer this little-girl-sweetheart of his-
Long afore
She knows who
"Santy-Claus" is!

WHEN OUR BABY DIED.

WHEN our baby died—
My Ma she ist cried an' cried!
Yes'n my Pa *he* cried too—
An' I cried—An' me an' you.—
An' I 'tended like my doll
She cried too—An' ever'—all—
O ist *ever'body* cried
When our baby died!

When our baby died—
Nen I got to took a ride!
An' we all ist rode an' rode
Clean to Heav'n where baby goed—
Mighty nigh!—An' nen Ma she
Cried ag'in—an' Pa—an' me.—
All but ist the *Angels* cried
When our baby died!

CHRISTINE BRAIBRY.

THE BEAUTIFUL DOLLY WHO COMES FROM
TENTOLEENA LAND,
BRINGING A STRANGE LETTER.

THE LETTER.

THIS little Dolly's name is Christine Braibry.* She was born in Tentoleena Land, where lilies and red roses grow in the air, and humming-birds and butterflies on stalks.

You must be kind to Christine, for everything about her in your land will be very strange to her. If she seems to stare in a bewildered way, and will not answer when you ask her why, you must know that she is simply dazed with the wonders that she sees on every hand. It will doubtless be a long, long while before Christine will cease to marvel at The Sunshine of your strange country; for in Tentoleena Land there is never any shine but Moonshine, and sometimes that gets so muddied up with shade it soils the eye-sight to gaze at it overmuch.

It will be trying, in your land, for Christine to keep silent all the time, for, in your country, Dollies cannot walk and talk at all perfectly, because they only think they are dreaming all the time, and they dare not speak for fear their voices will awaken them, and they dare not move for fear of falling out of bed. So, you see, you should be very kind indeed to little Christine Braibry.

In Tentoleena Land the Dollies do not sleep long—they

*The terminal of this name is sounded short, as in "lovely."

are always the first ones up at Moon-dawn—for Moon-dawn is the Dollies' morning. Then they go out in the fragrant grasses, where the big, ripe dew-drops grow—much nicer, purer dew than yours on earth, for in Tentoleena Land they gather it before it has been skimmed, and all the pearly cream that gathers on the surface of the drops they stir up with the rest and bathe in that; and this is why the Dollies always have such delicate complexions. Then, when the baths are over, they dress themselves, and waken up their parents, and dress them—for in Tentoleena Land the parents are the children. Is not that odd ?

Sometime Christine may get used to your strange land and all the wonders that she sees; and if she ever does, and smiles at you, and pulls your face down close to hers and kisses you, why, that will be the sign by which you'll know she's coming to again and wants to talk; and so the first thing you must ask of her is to sing this little song she made of Tentoleena Land. Only the words of it can be given here—(not half the beauty of the dainty song)—for when you *hear* it, in the marvelously faint, and low, and sweet, and tender, tinkling tongue of Tentoleena Land you will indeed be glad that the gracious fairy Fortune ever sent you Christine Braibry.

So, since all the sounds in the melodious utterance of Tentoleena Land are so exquisitely—so chastely, rarely beautiful no earthly art may hope to reproduce them, you must, as you here read the words, just shut your eyes and *fancy* that you hear little Christine Braibry singing this eerie song of hers :—

CHRISTINE'S SONG.

UP in Tentoleena Land—
Tentoleena! Tentoleena!
All the Dollies, hand in hand,
Mina, Nainie, and Serena,
Dance the Fairy fancy dances,
With glad songs and starry glances,
Lisping roundelays; and, after,
Bird-like interludes of laughter
Strewn and scattered o'er the lawn
Their gilt sandals twinkle on
Through light mists of silver sand—
Up in Tentoleena Land.

Up in Tentoleena Land—
Tentoleena! Tentoleena!
Blares the eerie Elfin band—
Trumpet, harp and concertina—
Larkspur bugle—honeysuckle
Cornet, with a quickstep chuckle
In its golden throat; and, maybe,
Lilies-of-the-valley they be
Baby-silver-bells that chime
Musically all the time,
Tossed about from hand to hand—
Up in Tentoleena Land.

Up in Tentoleena Land—
Tentoleena! Tentoleena!
Dollies dark, and blonde and bland—
Sweet as muskrose or verbena—
Sweet as moon-blown daffodillies,
Or wave-jostled water-lilies
Yearning to'rd the rose-mouths, ready
Leaning o'er the river's eddy,—
Dance, and glancing fling to you,
Through these lines you listen to,
Kisses blown from lip and hand
Out of Tentoleena Land!

THE SQUIRTGUN UNCLE MAKED ME.

UNCLE Sidney, when he was here,
Maked me a squirtgun out o' some
Elder-bushes 'at growed out near
Where was the brickyard—'way out clear
To where the toll-gate come!

So when we walked back home again,
He maked it, out in our woodhouse where
Was the old workbench, an' the old jack-plane,
An' the old 'pokeshave, an' the tools all lay'n
Ist like he wants 'em there.

He sawed it first with the old hand-saw;
An' nen he peeled off the bark, an' got
Some glass an' scraped it; an' told 'bout Pa,
When *he* was a boy an' fooled his Ma,
An' the whippin' 'at he caught.

Nen Uncle Sidney, he took an' filed
A' old arn ramrod; an' one o' the ends
He screwed fast into the vise; an' smiled,
Thinkin', he said, o' when he was a child,
'Fore him an' Pa was mens.

He punched out the peth, an' nen he put
A plug in the end with a hole notched through;
Nen took the old drawey-knife an' cut
An' maked a handle 'at shoved clean shut
But ist where yer hand held to.

An' he wropt th'uther end with some string an' white
Piece o' the sleeve of a' old tored shirt;
An' nen he showed me to hold it tight,
An' suck in the water an' work it right—
An' it 'ud ist squirt an' squirt!

A HOME-MADE FAIRY-TALE.

BUD, come here to your Uncle a spell,
And I'll tell you something you mustn't tell—
For it's a secret and shore-nuff true,
And maybe I oughtn't to tell it to you!—
But out in the garden, under the shade
Of the apple-trees, where we romped and played
Till the moon was up, and you thought I'd gone
Fast asleep.—That was all put on!
For I was a-watchin' something queer
Goin' on there in the grass, my dear!
'Way down deep in it, there I see
A little dude-Fairy who winked at me,
And snapped his fingers, and laughed as low
And fine as the whine of a mus-kee-to!
I kept still—watchin' him closer—and
I noticed a little guitar in his hand,
Which he leant 'ginst a little dead bee—and laid
His cigarette down on a clean grass-blade;
And then climbed up on the shell of a snail—
Carefully dusting his swallowtail—
And pulling up, by a waxed web-thread,
This little guitar, you remember, I said!
And there he trinkled and trilled a tune—
"My Love, so Fair, Tans in the Moon!"

Till presently, out of the clover-top
He seemed to be singing to, came, k'pop!
The purtiest, daintiest Fairy face
In all this world, or any place!
Then the little ser'nader waved his hand,
As much as to say, "We'll excuse *you!*" and
I heard, as I squinted my eyelids to,
A kiss like the drip of a drop of dew!

THE YOUTHFUL PRESS.

LITTLE Georgie Tompers, he
Printed some fine cards for me;
But his press had "J" for *James*—
By no means the choice of names.—

Yet it's proper, none the less,
That his little printing-press
Should be taught that *James* for "J"
Always is the better way.

For, if left to its own whim,
Next time it might call me "Jim,"—
Then THE CULTURED PRESS would be
Shocked at such a liberty.

Therefore, little presses all
Should be trained, while they are small,
To develop *taste* in these
Truths that shape our destines.

THAT-AIR YOUNG-UN.

THAT-AIR young-un ust to set
By the crick here day by day.—
Watch the swallers dip and wet
Their slim wings and skoot away;
Watch these little snipes along
The low banks tilt up and down
'Mongst the reeds, and hear the song
Of the bullfrogs croakin' roun':
Ust to set here in the sun
Watchin' things, and listenun,
Peared-like, mostly to the roar
Of the dam below, er to
That-air riffle nigh the shore
Jes' acrost from me and you.
Ust to watch him from the door
Of the mill.—'Ud rigg him out
With a fishin'-pole and line—
Dig worms fer him—nigh about
Jes' spit on his bait!—but he
Never keered much, 'pearantly,
To ketch fish!—He druther fine
Out some sunny place, and set
Watchin' things, with droopy head,
And "a-listenun," he said—
"Kindo' listenun above

The old crick to what the wet
Warter was a-talkin' of!"

Jevver hear sich talk as that?
Bothered *Mother* more'n me
What the child was cipher'n at.—
Come home onc't and said 'at he
Knowed what the snakefeeders thought
When they grit their wings; and knowed
Turkle-talk, when bubbles riz
Over where the old roots growed
Where he th'owed them pets o' his—
Little turripuns he caught
In the County Ditch and packed
In his pockets days and days!—
Said he knowed what goslin's quacked—
Could tell what the killdees sayes,
And grasshoppers, when they lit
In the crick and "minnies" bit
Off their legs.—"But, *blame!*" sayes he,
Sorto' lookin' clean above
Mother's head and on through me—
(And them eyes!—I see 'em yet!)—
"*Blame!*" he says, "ef I kin see,
Er make *out*, jes' what the wet
Warter is a-talkin' of!"

Made me *nervous!* Mother, though,
Said best not to scold the child—
The Good Bein' knowed.—And so
We was only riconciled
When he'd be asleep—And then,
Time, and time, and time again,
We've watched over him, you know—
Her a-sayin' nothin'—jes'
Kindo' smoothin' back his hair,
And, all to herself, I guess,
Studyin' up some kind o' prayer
She ain't tried yet.—Onc't she said,
Cotin' Scriptur', " 'He,' " says she,
In a solemn whisper, " 'He
Givuth His beloved sleep!' "
And jes' then I heerd the rain
Strike the shingles, as I turned
Res'less to'rds the wall again.
Pity strong men dast to weep!—
'Specially when up above
Thrash! the storm comes down, and you
Feel the midnight plum soaked through
Heart and soul, and wunder, too,
What the warter's talkin' of!

. . . .

Found his hat way down below
Hinchman's Ford. 'Ves' Anders he

Rid and fetched it. Mother she
Went *wild* over that, you know—
Hugged it! kissed it!—*Turribul!*
My hopes then was all gone too...
Brung him in, with both hands full
O' warter-lilies—'peared-like new-
Bloomed fer him—renched whiter still
In the clear rain—mixin' fine
And finer in the noon sunshine...
Winders of the old mill looked
On him where the hill-road crooked
In on through the open gate...
Laid him on the old settee
On the porch there. Heerd the great
Roarin' dam acrost—and we
Heerd a crane cry in amongst
The sycamores—and then a dove
Cutterin' on the mill-roof—then
Heerd the crick, and thought again,
"*Now* what's it a-talkin' of?"

BABY'S DYING.

BABY'S dying,
Do not stir—
Let her spirit lightly float
Through the sighing
Lips of her—
Still the murmur in the throat;
Let the moan of grief be curbed—
Baby must not be disturbed!

Baby's dying,
Do not stir—
Let her pure life lightly swim
Through the sighing
Lips of her—
Out from us and up to HIM—
Let her leave us with that smile—
Kiss and miss her after while.

GRANNY'S COME TO OUR HOUSE.

GRANNY'S come to our house!
An' ho! my lawzy-daisy!
All the childern round the place
Is ist a-runnin' crazy!
Fetched a cake fer little Jake,
An' fetched a pie fer Nanny,
An' fetched a pear fer all the pack
'At runs to kiss their Granny!

Lucy Ellen's in her lap,
An' Wade, an' Silas Walker,
Both's a-ridin' on her foot,
An' Pollos on the rocker;
An' Marthy's twins, from Aunt Marinn's,
An' little Orphant Annie,
All's a-eatin' gingerbread
An' giggle-un at Granny!

Tells us all the Fairy tales
Ever thought er wundered—
An' 'bundance o' other stories—
Bet she knows a hunderd!—
Bob's the one fer "Whittington,"
An' "Golden Locks" fer Fanny!
Hear 'em laugh an' clap their hands,
Listenun' at Granny!

"Jack the Giunt-Killer" 's good—
An' "Bean-Stalk" 's another—
So's the one of "Cinderell' "
And her old godmother;—
That-un's best of all the rest—
Bestest one of any,—
Where the mices scampers home,
Like we runs to Granny!

Granny's come to our house!
Ho! my lawzy-daisy!
All the childern round the place
Is ist a-runnin' crazy!
Fetched a cake fer little Jake,
An' fetched a pie fer Nanny,
An' fetched a pear fer all the pack
'At runs to kiss their Granny!

THE BOYS.

WHERE are they?—the friends of my childhood enchanted—
The clear, laughing eyes looking back in my own,
And the warm, chubby fingers my palms have so wanted,
As when we raced over
Pink pastures of clover,
And mocked the quail's whir and the bumble-bee's drone?

Have the breezes of time blown their blossomy faces
Forever adrift down the years that are flown?
Am I never to see them romp back to their places,
Where over the meadow,
In sunshine and shadow,
The meadow-larks trill, and the bumble-bees drone?

Where are they? Ah! dim in the dust lies the clover;
The whippoorwill's call has a sorrowful tone,
And the dove's—I have wept at it over and over;—
I want the glad lustre
Of youth, and the cluster
Of faces asleep where the bumble-bees drone!

THE STEPMOTHER.

FIRST she come to our house,
Tommy run and hid;
And Emily and Bob and me
We cried jus' like we did
When Mother died,—and we all said
'At we all wisht 'at *we* was dead!

And Nurse she couldn't stop us,
And Pa he tried and tried,—
We sobbed and shook and wouldn't look,
But only cried and cried;
And nen—Someone—we couldn't jus'
Tell who—was cryin' same as us!

Our Stepmother! Yes, it was her,
Her arms around us all—
'Cause Tom slid down the bannister
And peeked in from the hall.—
And we all *love* her, too, because
She's purt'nigh good at Mother was!

OLD MAN'S NURSERY RHYME.

I.

IN THE jolly winters
Of the long-ago,
It was not so cold as now—
O! No! No!
Then, as I remember,
Snowballs to eat
Were as good as apples now,
And every bit as sweet!

II.

In the jolly winters
Of the dead-and-gone,
Bub was warm as summer,
With his red mitts on,—
Just in his little waist-
And-pants all together,
Who ever heard him growl
About cold weather?

III.

In the jolly winters of the long-ago—
Was it *half* so cold as now?
O! No! No!
Who caught his death o' cold,
Making prints of men
Flat-backed in snow that now's
Twice as cold again?

IV.

In the jolly winters
Of the dead-and-gone,
Startin' out rabbit-huntin'
Early as the dawn,—
Who ever froze his fingers,
Ears, heels, or toes,—
Or'd a cared if he had?
Nobody knows!

V.

Nights by the kitchen-stove,
Shellin' white and red
Corn in the skillet, and
Sleepin' four abed!
Ah! the jolly winters
Of the long-ago!
We were not as old as now—
O! No! No!

THE SONG OF YESTERDAY.

BUT yesterday
I looked away
O'er happy lands, where sunshine lay
In golden blots,
Inlaid with spots
Of shade and wild forget-me-nots.

And, cool and sweet,
My naked feet
Found dewy pathways through the wheat;
And out again
Where, down the lane,
The dust was dimpled with the rain.

But yesterday
I heard the lay
Of summer birds, when I, as they
With breast and wing,
All quivering
With life and love, could only sing.

My head was leant
Where, with it, blent
A maiden's, o'er her instrument,
While all the night,
From vale to height,
We filled with echoes of delight.

And all our dreams
Were lit with gleams
Of that lost land of reedy streams,
Along whose brim
Forever swim
Pan's lilies, laughing up at him.

But yesterday! . .
O blooms of May,
And summer roses—Where-away?
O stars above;
And lips of love,
And all the honeyed sweets thereof!

O lad and lass,
And orchard-pass,
And briered lane, and daisied grass!
O gleam and gloom,
And woodland bloom,
And breezy breaths of all perfume!—

No more for me
Nor mine shall be
Thy raptures—save in memory,—
No more—no more—
Till through the Door
Of Glory gleam the days of yore.

LITTLE ORPHANT ANNIE.

LITTLE Orphant Annie's come to our house to stay,
An' wash the cups an' saucers up, an' brush the crumbs away,
An' shoo the chickens off the porch, an' dust the hearth, an' sweep,
An' make the fire, an' bake the bread, an' earn her board-an'-keep;
An' all us other childern, when the supper things is done,
We set around the kitchen fire an' has the mostest fun
A-list'nin' to the witch-tales 'at Annie tells about,
An' the Gobble-uns 'at gits you
Ef you
Don't
Watch
Out!

Onc't they was a little boy wouldn't say his prayers,—
An' when he went to bed at night, away up stairs,
His Mammy heered him holler, an' his Daddy heered him bawl,
An' when they turn't the kivvers down, he wasn't there at all!
An' they secked him in the rafter-room, an' cubby-hole, an' press,

An' seeked him up the chimbly-flue, an' ever'wheres, I guess;
But all they ever found was thist his pants an' roundabout:—
An' the Gobble-uns 'll git you
Ef you
Don't
Watch
Out!

An' one time a little girl 'ud allus laugh an' grin,
An' make fun of ever'one, an' all her blood an' kin;
An' onc't, when they was "company," an' ole folks was there,
She mocked 'em an' shocked 'em, an' said she didn't care!
An' thist as she kicked her heels, an' turn't to run an' hide,
They was two great big Black Things a-standin' by her side,
An' they snatched her through the ceilin' 'fore she knowed
what she's about!
An' the Gobble-uns'll git you
Ef you
Don't
Watch
Out!

An' little Orphant Annie says, when the blaze is blue,
An' the lamp-wick sputters, an' the wind goes *woo-oo!*
An' you hear the crickets quit, an' the moon is gray,
An' the lightnin'-bugs in dew is all squenched away,—
You better mind yer parents, an' yer teachers fond an' dear,

An' churish them 'at loves you, an' dry the orphant's tear,
An' he'p the pore an' needy ones 'at clusters all about,
Er the Gobble-uns'll git you
Ef you
Don't
Watch
Out!

BABYHOOD.

HEIGH-HO! Babyhood! Tell me where you linger!
Let's toddle home again, for we have gone astray;
Take this eager hand of mine and lead me by the finger
Back to the lotus-lands of the far-away!

Turn back the leaves of life.—Don't read the story.—
Let's find the pictures, and fancy all the rest;
We can fill the written pages with a brighter glory
Than old Time, the story-teller, at his very best.

Turn to the brook where the honeysuckle tipping
O'er its vase of perfume spills it on the breeze,
And the bee and humming-bird in ecstacy are sipping
From the fairy-flagons of the blooming locust trees.

Turn to the lane where we used to "teeter-totter,"
Printing little foot-palms in the mellow mould—
Laughing at the lazy cattle wading in the water
Where the ripples dimple round the buttercups of gold.

Where the dusky turtle lies basking on the gravel
Of the sunny sand-bar in the middle tide,
And the ghostly dragonfly pauses in his travel
To rest like a blossom where the water-lily died.

Heigh-ho! Babyhood! Tell me where you linger!
Let's toddle home again, for we have gone astray;
Take this eager hand of mine and lead me by the finger
Back to the lotus-lands of the far-away!

MAX AND JIM.

MAX an' Jim,
They're each uthers'
Fat an' slim
Little bruthers.

Max is thin,
An' Jim, the fac's is,
Fat agin'
As little Max is!

Their Pa 'lowed
He don't know whuther
He's most proud
Of one er th'uther!

Their Ma says
They're both so sweet–'*m*!—
That she guess
She'll haf to eat 'em!

THE CIRCUS-DAY PARADE.

OH THE Circus-Day parade! How the bugles played and played!
And how the glossy horses tossed their flossy manes, and neighed,
As the rattle and the rhyme of the tenor-drummer's time
Filled all the hungry hearts of us with melody sublime!

How the grand band-wagon shone with a splendor all its own,
And glittered with a glory that our dreams had never known!
And how the boys behind, high and low of every kind,
Marched in unconscious capture, with a rapture undefined!

How the horsemen, two and two, with their plumes of white and blue,
And crimson, gold and purple, nodding by at me and you,
Waved the banners that they bore, as the Knights in days of yore,
Till our glad eyes gleamed and glistened like the spangles that they wore!

How the graceless-graceful stride of the elephant was eyed,
And the capers of the little horse that cantered at his side!
How the shambling camels, tame to the plaudits of their fame,
With listless eyes came silent, masticating as they came.

How the cages jolted past, with each wagon battened fast,
And the mystery within it only hinted of at last
From the little grated square in the rear, and nosing there
The snout of some strange animal that sniffed the outer air!

And, last of all, The Clown, making mirth for all the town,
With his lips curved ever upward and his eyebrows ever down,
And his chief attention paid to the little mule that played
A tattoo on the dashboard with his heels, in the parade.

Oh! the Circus-Day parade! How the bugles played and played!
And how the glossy horses tossed their flossy manes and neighed,
As the rattle and the rhyme of the tenor-drummer's time
Filled all the hungry hearts of us with melody sublime!

THE OLD HAY-MOW.

THE Old Hay-mow's the place to play
Fer boys, when it's a rainy day!
I good-'eal ruther be up there
Than down in town, er anywhere!

When I play in our stable-loft,
The good old hay's so dry an' soft,
An' feels so fine, an' smells so sweet,
I 'most ferget to go an' eat.

An' one time onc't I *did* ferget
To go 'tel dinner was all et,—
An' they had short-cake—an' —Bud he
Hogged up the piece Ma saved fer me!

Nen I wo'nt let him play no more
In our hay-mow where I keep store
An' got hen-eggs to sell,—an' shoo
The cackle-un old hen out, too!

An' nen, when Aunty she was here
A-visitun from Rensselaer,
An' bringed my little cousin,—*he*
Can come up there an' play with me.

But, after while—when Bud he bets
'At I can't turn no summersetts,
I let him come up, ef he can
Ac' ha'f-way like a gentleman!

JOHN TARKINGTON JAMESON.

JOHN JAMESON, my jo John!
Ye're bonnie wee an' sma';
Your ee's the morning violet,
Wi' tremblin' dew an' a';
Your smile's the gowden simmer-sheen,
Wi' glintin' pearls aglow
Atween the posies o' your lips,
John Jameson, my jo!

Ye hae the faither's braidth o' brow,
An' synes his look benign
Whiles he hings musin' ower the burne,
Wi' leestless hook an' line;
Ye hae the mither's mou' an' cheek,
An' denty chin—but O!
It's maist ye're like your ain braw sel',
John Jameson, my jo!

John Jameson, my jo John,
Though, wi' sic luvers twain,
Ye dance far yont your whustlin' frien'
Wha laggart walks his lane,—
Be mindet, though he naps his last
Whaur kirkyird thistles grow,
His ghaist shall caper on wi' you,
John Jameson, my jo!

DWAINIE—A SPRITE SONG.

O Dwainie! My Dwainie!
The Lurloo ever sings,
A tremor in his flossy crest
And in his glossy wings:
And Dwainie! My Dwainie!
The Winnowelvers call;
But Dwainie hides in Spirkland
And answers not at all.

The Teeper twitters Dwainie—
The Tcheucker, on his spray,
Teeters up and down the wind
And will not fly away;
And Dwainie! My Dwainie!
The drowsy Oovers drawl;
But Dwainie hides in Spirkland
And answers not at all.

O Dwainie! My Dwainie!
The breezes hold their breath—
The stars are pale as blossoms,
And the night as still as death;
And Dwainie! My Dwainie!
The fainting echoes fall;
But Dwainie hides in Spirkland
And answers not at all.

GUINEYPIGS.

GUINEYPIGS is awful cute,
With their little trimbly snoot
Sniffin' at the pussly that
We bring 'em to nibble at.
Looks like they're so clean an' white,
An' so dainty an' polite,
They could eat like you an' me
When they's company!

Tiltin' down the clover-tops
Till they spill, an' over drops
The sweet morning dew—Don't you
Think they might have napkins, too?
Ef a guineypig was big
As a *shore-an'-certain* pig,
Nen he wouldn't ac' so fine
When he come to dine.

Nen he'd chomp his jaws an' eat
Things out in the dirty street,
Dirt an' all! An' nen lay down
In mudholes an' waller roun'!
So the *guineypigs* is best,
'Cause they're nice an' tidiest;
They eat'most like you an' me
When they's company!

BUSCH AND TOMMY.

LITTLE BUSCH and Tommy Hays—
Small the theme, but large the praise,—
For two braver brothers,
Of such toddling years and size,
Bloom of face, and blue of eyes,
Never trampled soldier-wise
On the rights of mothers!

Even boldly facing their
Therapeutic father's air
Of complex abstraction,
But to kindle—kindlier gaze,
Wake more smiles and gracious ways—
Ay, nor find in all their days
Ampler satisfaction!

Hail ye, then, with chirp and cheer,
All wan patients, waiting here
Bitterer medications!—
Busch and Tommy, *tone* us, too.—
How our life-blood leaps anew,
Under loving touch of you
And your ministrations!

LITTLE MAHALA ASHCRAFT.

"LITTLE HALY! Little Haly!" cheeps the robin in the tree;
"Little Haly!" sighs the clover; "Little Haly!" moans the bee;
"Little Haly! Little Haly!" calls the kill-dee at twilight;
And the katydids and crickets hollers "Haly" all the night.

The sunflowers and the hollyhawks droops over the garden fence;
The old path down the garden walks still holds her footprints' dents;
And the well-sweep's swingin' bucket seems to wait fer her to come
And start it on its wortery errant down the old bee-gum.

The bee-hives all is quiet, and the little Jersey steer,
When any one comes nigh it, acts so lonesome-like and queer;
And the little Banty chickens kind o' cutters faint and low,
Like the hand that now was feedin' 'em was one they didn't know.

They's sorrow in the wavin' leaves of all the apple-trees;
And sorrow in the harvest-sheaves, and sorrow in the breeze;
And sorrow in the twitter of the swallers 'round the shed;
And all the song her red-bird sings is "Little Haly's dead!"

The medder 'pears to miss her, and the pathway through the
grass,
Whare the dewdrops ust to kiss her little bare feet as she
passed;
And the old pin in the gate-post seems to kindo'-sorto' doubt
That Haly's little sunburnt hand'll ever pull it out.

Did her father er her mother ever love her more'n me?
Er her sisters er her brother prize her love more tenderly?
I question—and what answer?—only tears, and tears alone,
And ev'ry neghbor's eyes is full o' tear-drops as my own.

"Little Haly! Little Haly!" cheeps the robin in the tree;
"Little Haly!" sighs the clover; "Little Haly!" moans the bee;
"Little Haly! Little Haly!" calls the kill-dee at twilight;
And the katydids and crickets hollers "Haly" all the night.

BABE HERRICK.

AS a rosebud might, in dreams,
Mid some lilies lie, meseems
Thou, pink youngling, on the breast
Of thy mother slumberest.

THE LAND OF THUS-AND-SO.

"HOW would Willie like to go
To the Land of Thus-and-So?
Everything is proper there—
All the children comb their hair
Smoother than the fur of cats,
Or the nap of high silk hats;
Every face is clean and white
As a lily washed in light;
Never vaguest soil or speck
Found on forehead, throat or neck—
Every little crimpled ear,
In and out, as pure and clear
As the cherry-blossom's blow
In the Land of Thus-and-So.

"Little boys that never fall
Down the stairs, or cry at all—
Doing nothing to repent,
Watchful and obedient;
Never hungry, nor in haste—
Tidy shoestrings always laced;
Never button rudely torn

From its fellows all unworn;
Knickerbockers always new—
Ribbon, tie, and collar, too;
Little watches, worn like men,
Always promptly half-past-10—
Just precisely right, you know,
For the Land of Thus-and-So!

"And the little babies there
Give no one the slightest care—
Nurse has not a thing to do
But be happy and sigh 'Boo!'
While Mamma just nods, and knows
Nothing but to doze and doze:
Never litter round the grate;
Never lunch or dinner late;
Never any household din
Peals without or rings within—
Baby coos nor laughing calls
On the stairs or through the halls—
Just Great Hushes to and fro
Pace the Land of Thus-and-So!

"Oh! the Land of Thus-and-So!—
Isn't it delightful, though?"
"Yes," lisped Willie, answering me
Somewhat slow and doubtfully—

"Must be awful nice, but I
Ruther wait till by and by
'Fore I go there—maybe when
I be dead I'll go there *then*.—
But"—The troubled little face
Closer pressed in my embrace—
"Le's don't never *ever* go
To the Land of Thus-and-So!"

GRANDFATHER SQUEERS.

"MY grandfather Squeers," said The Raggedy-Man,
As he solemnly lighted his pipe and began—

"The most indestructible man, for his years,
And the grandest on earth, was my grandfather Squeers!

"He said, when he rounded his three-score-and-ten,
'I've the hang of it now and can do it again!'

"He had frozen his heels so repeatedly, he
Could tell by them just what the weather would be;

"And would laugh and declare, 'while *the Almanac* would
Most falsely prognosticate, *he* never could!'

"Such a hale constitution had grandfather Squeers
That, 'though he'd used "*navy*" for sixty odd years,

"He still chewed a dime's-worth six days of the week,
While the seventh he passed with a chew in each cheek:

"Then my grandfather Squeers had a singular knack
Of sitting around on the small of his back,

"With his legs like a letter Y stretched o'er the grate
Wherein 'twas his custom to ex-pec-tor-ate.

"He was fond of tobacco in *manifold* ways,
And would sit on the door-step, of sunshiny days,

"And smoke leaf-tobacco he'd raised strictly for
The pipe he'd used all through The Mexican War."

And The Raggedy Man said, refilling the bowl
Of his *own* pipe and leisurely picking a coal

From the stove with his finger and thumb, "You can see
What a tee-nacious habit he's fastened on me!

"And my grandfather Squeers took a special delight
In pruning his corns every Saturday night

"With a horn-handled razor, whose edge he excused
By saying 'twas one that his grandfather used;

"And, though deeply etched in the haft of the same
Was the ever-euphonious Wostenholm's name,

"'Twas my grandfather's custom to boast of the blade
As 'A Seth Thomas razor—the best ever made!'

"No Old Settlers' Meeting, or Pioneers' Fair,
Was complete without grandfather Squeers in the chair,

"To lead off the programme by telling folks how
'He used to shoot deer where the Court House stands now'—

"How 'he felt, of a truth, to live over the past,
When the country was wild and unbroken and vast,·

"That the little log cabin was just plenty fine
For himself, his companion, and fambly of nine!—

"When they didn't have even a pump, or a tin,
But drunk surface-water, year out and year in,

"From the old-fashioned gourd that was sweeter, by odds,
Than the goblets of gold at the lips of the gods!' "

Then The Raggedy Man paused to plaintively say
It was clockin' along to'rds the close of the day—

And he'd *ought* to get back to his work on the lawn,—
Then dreamily blubbered his pipe and went on:

"His teeth were imperfect—my grandfather owned
That he couldn't eat oysters unless they were 'boned;'

"And his eyes were so weak, and so feeble of sight,
He couldn't sleep with them unless, every night,

"He put on his spectacles—all he possessed,—
Three pairs—with his goggles on top of the rest.

"And my grandfather always, retiring at night,
Blew down the lamp-chimney to put out the light;

"Then he'd curl up on edge like a shaving, in bed,
And puff and smoke pipes in his sleep, it is said:

"And would snore oftentimes, as the legends relate,
Till his folks were wrought up to a terrible state,—

"Then he'd snort, and rear up, and roll over; and there,
In the subsequent hush they could hear him chew air.

"And so glaringly bald was the top of his head
That many's the time he has musingly said,

"As his eyes journeyed o'er its reflex in the glass,—
'I must set out a few signs of *Keep Off the Grass!*'

"So remarkably deaf was my grandfather Squeers
That he had to wear lightning-rods over his ears

"To even hear thunder—and oftentimes then
He was forced to request it to thunder again."

THE LITTLE TINY KICKSHAW.

O THE little tiny kickshaw that Mither sent tae me,
'Tis sweeter than the sugar-plum that reepens on the tree,
Wi' denty flavorin's o' spice an' musky rosemarie,
The little tiny kickshaw that Mither sent tae me.

'Tis luscious wi' the stalen tang o' fruits frae ower the sea,
An' e'en its fragrance gars we laugh wi' langin' lip an' ee,
Till a' its frazen sheen o' white maun melten hinnie be—
Sae weel I luve the kickshaw that Mither sent tae me.

O I luve the tiny kickshaw, an' I smack my lips wi' glee,
Aye mickle do I luve the taste o' sic a luxourie,
But maist I luve the luvein' han's that could the giftie gie
O' the little tiny kickshaw that Mither sent tae me.

THE LUGUBRIOUS WHING-WHANG.

THE rhyme o' The Raggedy Man's 'at's best
Is Tickle me, Love, in these Lonesome Ribs,—
'Cause that-un's the strangest of all o' the rest,
An' the worst to learn, an' the last one guessed,
An' the funniest one, an' the foolishest.—
Tickle me, Love, in these Lonesome Ribs!

I don't know what in the world it means—
Tickle me, Love, in these Lonesome Ribs!—
An' nen when I *tell* him I don't, he leans
Like he was a-grindin' on some machines
An' says: Ef I *don't*, w'y, I don't know *beans*!
Tickle me, Love, in these Lonesome Ribs!

Out on the margin of Moonshine Land,
Tickle me, Love, in these Lonesome Ribs!
Out where the Whing-Whang loves to stand,
Writing his name with his tail in the sand,
And swiping it out with his oogerish hand;
Tickle me, Love, in these Lonesome Ribs!

Is it the gibber of Gungs or Keeks?
Tickle me, Love, in these Lonesome Ribs!
Or what *is* the sound that the Whing-Whang seeks?—
Crouching low by the winding creeks,
And holding his breath for weeks and weeks!
Tickle me, Love, in these Lonesome Ribs!

Aroint him the wraithest of wraithly things!
Tickle me, Love, in these Lonesome Ribs!
'Tis a fair Whing-Whangess, with phosphor rings,
And bridal-jewels of fangs and stings;
And she sits and as sadly and softly sings
As the mildewed whir of her own dead wings,—
Tickle me, Dear,
Tickle me here,
Tickle me, Love, in me Lonesome Ribs!

LAWYER AND CHILD.

HOW large was Alexander, father,
That parties designate
The historic gentleman as rather
Inordinately great?

Why, son, to speak with conscientious
Regard for history,
Waiving all claims, of course, to heights pretentious,—
About the size of me.

THE SOUTH WIND AND THE SUN.

O THE South Wind and the Sun!
How each loved the other one—
Full of fancy—full of folly—
Full of jollity and fun!
How they romped and ran about,
Like two boys when school is out,
With glowing face, and lisping lip,
Low laugh, and lifted shout!

And the South Wind—he was dressed
With a ribbon round his breast
That floated, flapped and fluttered
In a riotous unrest;
And a drapery of mist,
From the shoulder and the wrist
Flowing backward with the motion
Of the waving hand he kissed.

And the Sun had on a crown
Wrought of gilded thistledown,
And a scarf of velvet vapor,
And a raveled-rainbow gown;
And his tinsel-tangled hair,
Tossed and lost upon the air,
Was glossier and flossier
Than any anywhere.

And the South Wind's eyes were two
Little dancing drops of dew,
As he puffed his cheeks, and pursed his lips,
And blew and blew and blew!
And the Sun's—like diamond-stone,
Brighter yet than ever known,
As he knit his brows and held his breath,
And shone and shone and shone!

And this pair of merry fays
Wandered through the summer days;
Arm-in-arm they went together
Over heights of morning haze—
Over slanting slopes of lawn
They went on and on and on,
Where the daisies looked like star-tracks
Trailing up and down the dawn.

And where'er they found the top
Of a wheat-stalk droop and lop,
They chucked it underneath the chin
And praised the lavish crop,
Till it lifted with the pride
Of the heads it grew beside,
And then the South Wind and the Sun
Went onward satisfied.

Over meadow-lands they tripped,
Where the dandelions dipped
In crimson foam of clover-bloom,
And dripped and dripped and dripped!
And they clinched the bumble-stings,
Gauming honey on their wings,
And bundling them in lily-bells,
With maudlin murmurings.

And the humming-bird, that hung
Like a jewel up among
The tilted honeysuckle-horns,
They mesmerized and swung
In the palpitating air,
Drowsed with odors strange and rare,
And, with whispered laughter, slipped away,
And left him hanging there.

And they braided blades of grass
Where the truant had to pass;
And they wriggled through the rushes
And the reeds of the morass,
Where they danced, in rapture sweet,
O'er the leaves that laid a street
Of undulant mosaic for
The touches of their feet.

By the brook with mossy brink,
Where the cattle came to drink,
They trilled and piped and whistled
With the thrush and bobolink,
Till the kine, in listless pause,
Switched their tails in mute applause,
With lifted heads, and dreamy eyes,
And bubble-dripping jaws.

And where the melons grew,
Streaked with yellow, green and blue,
These jolly sprites went wandering
Through spangled paths of dew;
And the melons, here and there,
They made love to, everywhere,
Turning their pink souls to crimson
With caresses fond and fair.

Over orchard walls they went,
Where the fruited boughs were bent
Till they brushed the sward beneath them
Where the shine and shadow blent;
And the great green pear they shook
Till the sallow hue forsook
Its features, and the gleam of gold
Laughed out in every look.

And they stroked the downy cheek
Of the peach, and smoothed it sleek,
And flushed it into splendor;
And, with many an elfish freak,
Gave the russet's rust a wipe—
Prankt the rambo with a stripe,
And the winesap blushed its reddest
As they spanked the pippins ripe.

Through the woven ambuscade
That the twining vines had made,
They found the grapes, in clusters,
Drinking up the shine and shade—
Plumpt, like tiny skins of wine,
With a vintage so divine
That the tongue of Fancy tingled
With the tang of muscadine.

And the golden-banded bees,
Droning o'er the flowery leas,
They bridled, reined, and rode away
Across the fragrant breeze,
Till in hollow oak and elm
They had groomed and stabled them
In waxen stalls that oozed with dews
Of rose and lily-stem.

Where the dusty highway leads,
High above the wayside weeds,
They sowed the air with butterflies
Like blooming flower-seeds,
Till the dull grasshopper sprung
Half a man's-height up, and hung
Tranced in the heat, with whirring wings,
And sung and sung and sung!

And they loitered, hand in hand,
Where the snipe along the sand
Of the river ran to meet them
As the ripple meets the land,
Till the dragonfly, in light
Gauzy armor, burnished bright,
Came tilting down the waters
In a wild, bewildered flight.

And they heard the killdee's call,
And afar, the waterfall,
But the rustle of a falling leaf
They heard above it all;
And the trailing willow crept
Deeper in the tide that swept
The leafy shallop to the shore,
And wept and wept and wept!

And the fairy vessel veered
From its moorings—tacked and steered
For the center of the current—
Sailed away and disappeared:
And the burthen that it bore
From the long-enchanted shore—
"Alas! the South Wind and the Sun!"
I murmur evermore.

For the South Wind and the Sun,
Each so loves the other one,
For all his jolly folly,
And frivolity and fun,
That our love for them they weigh
As their fickle fancies may,
And when at last we love them most,
They laugh and sail away.

THE FUNNIEST THING IN THE WORLD.

THE funniest thing in the world, I know,
Is watchin' the monkeys 'at's in the show!—
Jumpin' an' runnin' an' racin' roun',
'Way up the top o' the pole; nen down!
First they're here, an' nen they're there,
An' ist a'most any an' ever'where!—
Screechin' an' scratchin' wherever they go,
They're the funniest thing in the world, I know!

They're the funniest thing in the world, I think:—
Funny to watch 'em eat an' drink;
Funny to watch 'em a-watchin' us,
An' actin' 'most like grown folks does!—
Funny to watch 'em p'tend to be
Skeerd at their tail 'at they happen to see;—
But the funniest thing in the world they do
Is never to laugh, like me an' you!

CRADLE SONG.

THE Maple strews the embers of its leaves
O'er the laggard swallows nestled 'neath the eaves;
And the moody cricket falters in his cry—Baby-bye!—
And the lid of night is falling o'er the sky—Baby-bye!—
The lid of night is falling o'er the sky!

The rose is lying pallid, and the cup
Of the frosted calla-lily folded up;
And the breezes through the garden sob and sigh—Baby-bye!—
O'er the sleeping blooms of summer where they lie—Baby-bye!—
O'er the sleeping blooms of summer where they lie!

Yet, Baby—O my Baby, for your sake
This heart of mine is ever wide awake,
And my love may never droop a drowsy eye—Baby-bye!—
Till your own are wet above me when I die—Baby-bye!—
Till your own are wet above me when I die.

LITTLE JOHNTS'S CHRISMUS.

WE got it up a-purpose, jes' fer little Johnts, you know;
His mother was so pore an' all, an' had to manage so—
Jes' bein' a War-widder, an' her pension mighty slim,
She'd take in weavin', er work out, er anything fer him!

An' little Johnts was puny-like—but law, *the nerve* he had!—
You'd want to kindo' pity him, but couldn't very bad—
His pants o' army-blanket an' his coat o' faded blue
Kep' hintin' of his father like, an' pity wouldn't do!

So we collogued together, onc't, one wintertime, 'at we—
Jes' me an' Mother an' the girls, an' Wilse, John-Jack an' Free—
Would jine an' git up little Johnts, by time 'at Chrismus come,
Some sorto' doin's, don't you know, 'at would su'prise him some.

An' so, all on the quiet, Mother she turns in an' gits
Some blue-janes—cuts an' makes a suit; an' then sets down an' knits
A pair o' little galluses to go 'long with the rest—
An' puts in a red-flannen back, an' buckle on the vest.—

The little feller'd be'n so much around our house, you see,
An' be'n sich he'p to her an' all, an' handy as could be,
'At Mother couldn't do too much fer little Johnts—No, *Sir!*—
She ust to jes' declare 'at "he was meat-an'-drink to her?"

An' Piney, Lide, an' Madeline they watched their chance an' rid
To Fountaintown with Lijey's folks; an' bought a book, they did,
O' fairy-tales, with pictur's in; an' got a little pair
O' red-top boots 'at John-Jack said he'd be'n a-pricen there.

An' Lide got him a little sword, an' Madaline, a drum;
An' shootin'-crackers—Lawsy-day! an' they're so dangersome!
An' Piney, ever'time the rest 'ud buy some other toy,
She'd take an' turn in then an' buy more candy fer the boy!

"Well," thinks-says-I, when they got back, "*your* pocketbooks is dry!"—
But little Johnts was there hisse'f that afternoon, so I—
Well, *all* of us kep' mighty mum, tel we got him away
By tellin' him be shore an' come to-morry—Chrismus Day—

An' fetch *his mother* 'long with him! An' how he scud acrost
The fields—his tow-head, in the dusk, jes' like a streak o' frost!—

His comfert fluttern as he run—an' old Tige, don't you know,
A-jumpin' high fer rabbits an' a-plowin' up the snow!

It must a-be'n 'most *ten* that night afore we got to bed—
With Wilse an' John-Jack he'ppin' us; an' Freeman in the shed,
An' Lide out with the lantern while he trimmed the Chrismus-tree
Out of a little scrub-oak-top 'at suited to a "T!"

All night I dreamp' o' hearin' things a-skulkin' round the place—
An' "Ole Kriss," with his whiskers off, an' freckles on his face—
An' reindeers, shaped like shavin'-hosses at the cooper-shop,
A-stickin' down the chimbly, with their heels out at the top!

By time 'at Mother got me up 'twas plum' daylight an' more—
The front yard full o' neighbers all a-crowdin' round the door,
With Johnts's mother leadin'; yes—an' little Johnts hisse'f,
Set up on Freeman's shoulder, like a jug up on the she'f!

Of course I can't describe it when they all got in to where
We'd conjered up the Chrismus-tree an' all the fixin's there!—
Fer all the shouts o' laughture—clappin' hands, an' crackin' jokes,
Was heap o' kissin' goin' on amongst the women-folks:—

Fer, lo-behold-ye! there they had that young-un!—An' his
chin
A-wobblin'-like;—an', shore enough, at last he started in—
An'—sich another bellerin', in all my mortal days,
I never heered, er 'spect to hear, in woe's app'inted ways!

An' Mother grabs him up an' says: "It's more'n he can bear—
It's all too *suddent* fer the child, an' too su'prisin'!—*There!*"
"Oh, no it ain't"—sobbed little Johnts—"I ain't su'prised—
but I'm
A-cryin' 'cause I watched you all, an' knowed it all the time!"

DOWN AROUND THE RIVER.

NOON-TIME an' June-time, down around the river!
Have to furse with 'Lizey Ann—but lawzy! I fergive her!
Drives me off the place, an' says 'at all 'at she's a-wishin',
Land o' gracious! time'll come I'll git enough o' fishin'!
Little Dave, a-choppin' wood, never 'pears to notice;
Don't know where she's hid his hat, er keerin' where his coat is,—
Specalatin', more'n like, he haint a goin' to mind me,
An' guessin' where, say twelve o'clock, a feller'd likely find me!

Noon-time an' June-time, down around the river!
Clean out o' sight o' home, an' skulkin' under kivver
Of the sycamores, jack-oaks, an' swamp-ash an' ellum—
Idies all so jumbled up, you kin hardly tell 'em!—
Tired, you know, but *lovin'* it, an' smilin' jes' to think 'at
Any *sweeter* tiredness you'd fairly want to *drink* it!
Tired o' fishin'—tired o' fun—line out slack an' slacker—
All you want in all the world's a little more tobacker!

Hungry, but *a-hidin'* it, er jes' a-not a-keerin':—
King-fisher gittin' up an' skootin' out o' hearin';
Snipes on the t'other side, where the County Ditch is,
Wadin' up an' down the aidge like they'd rolled their britches!
Old turkle on the root kindo-sorto drappin'
Intoo th' worter like de don't know how it happen!
Worter, shade an' all so mixed, don't know which you'd orter
Say; th' *worter* in the shadder—*shadder* in the *worter!*

Somebody hollerin'—'way around the bend in
Upper Fork—where yer eye kin jes' ketch the endin'
Of the shiney wedge o' wake some muss-rat's a-makin'
With that pesky nose o' his! Then a sniff o' bacon,
Corn-bread an' 'dock-greens—an' little Dave a-shinnin'
'Crost the rocks an' mussel-shells, a-limpin' an' a-grinnin',
With yer dinner fer ye, an' a blessin' from the giver,
Noon-time an' June-time down around the river!

THE BOYS' CANDIDATE.

LAS' time 'at Uncle Sidney come,
He bringed a watermelon home—
An' half the boys in town
Come taggin' after him.—An' he
Says, when we et it,—"*Gracious me!*
'S the boy-house fell down?"

THE BUMBLE-BEE.

YOU better not fool with a Bumbee-bee!—
Ef you don't think they can sting—you'll see!
They're lazy to look at, an' kindo' go
Buzzin' an' bummin' aroun' so slow,
An' ac' so slouchy an' all fagged out,
Danglin' their legs as they drone about
The hollyhawks 'at they can't climb in
'Ithout ist a-tumble-un out agin!
Wunst I watched one climb clean 'way
In a jim'son-blossom, I did, one day,—
An' I ist grabbed it—an' nen let go—
An' "*Ooh-ooh! Honey! I told ye so!*"
Says The Raggedy Man; an' he ist run
An' pullt out the stinger, an' don't laugh none,
An' says: "They *has* ben folks, I guess,
'At thought I wuz predjudust, more er less,—
Yit I still muntain 'at a Bumble-bee
Wears out his welcome too quick fer me!"

HE CALLED HER IN.

I.

HE called her in from me and shut the door.
And she so loved the sunshine and the sky!—
She loved them even better yet than I
That ne'er knew dearth of them—my mother dead,
Nature had nursed me in her lap instead:
And I had grown a dark and eerie child
That rarely smiled,
Save when, shut all alone in grasses high,
Looking straight up in God's great lonesome sky
And coaxing Mother to smile back on me.
'Twas lying thus, this fair girl suddenly
Came on me, nestled in the fields beside
A pleasant-seeming home, with doorway wide—
The sunshine beating in upon the floor
Like golden rain.—
O sweet, sweet face above me, turn again
And leave me! I had cried, but that an ache
Within my throat so gripped it I could make
No sound but a thick sobbing. Cowering so,
I felt her light hand laid
Upon my hair—a touch that ne'er before
Had tamed me thus, all soothed and unafraid—
It seemed the touch the children used to know
When Christ was here, so dear it was—so dear,—

At once I loved her as the leaves love dew
In midmost summer when the days are new.
Barely an hour I knew her, yet a curl
Of silken sunshine did she clip for me
Out of the bright May-morning of her hair,
And bound and gave it to me laughingly,
And caught my hands and called me "*Little girl*,"
Tip-toeing, as she spoke, to kiss me there!
And I stood dazed and dumb for very stress
Of my great happiness.
She plucked me by the gown, nor saw how mean
The raiment—drew me with her everywhere:
Smothered her face in tufts of grasses green:
Put up her dainty hands and peeped between
Her fingers at the blossoms—crooned and talked
To them in strange, glad whispers, as we walked,—
Said *this* one was her angel mother—*this*,
Her baby-sister—come back, for a kiss,
Clean from the Good-World!—smiled and kissed them, then
Closed her soft eyes and kissed them o'er again.
And so did she beguile me—so we played,—
She was the dazzling Shine—I, the dark Shade—
And we did mingle like to these, and thus,
Together, made
The perfect summer, pure and glorious.
So blent we, till a harsh voice broke upon

Our happiness.—She, startled as a fawn,
Cried, "Oh, 'tis Father!"—all the blossoms gone
From out her cheeks as those from out her grasp.—
Harsher the voice came:— She could only gasp
Affrightedly, "Good-bye!—good-bye! good-bye!"
And lo, I stood alone, with that harsh cry
Ringing a new and unknown sense of shame
Through soul and frame,
And, with wet eyes, repeating o'er and o'er,—
"He called her in from me and shut the door!"

II.

He called her in from me and shut the door!
And I went wandering alone again—
So lonely—O so very lonely then,
I thought no little sallow star, alone
In all a world of twilight, e'er had known
Such utter loneliness. But that I wore
Above my heart that gleaming tress of hair
To lighten up the night of my despair,
I think I might have groped into my grave,
Nor cared to wave
The ferns above it with a breath of prayer.
And how I hungered for the sweet, sweet face
That bent above me in my hiding-place
That day amid the grasses there beside
Her pleasant home!—"Her pleasant home!" I sighed,

Remembering;—then shut my teeth and feigned
The harsh voice calling *me*,—then clinched my nails
So deeply in my palms, the sharp wounds pained,
And tossed my face toward heaven, as one who pales
In splendid martyrdom, with soul serene,
As near to God as high the guillotine.
And I had *envied* her? Not that—O no!
But I had longed for some sweet haven so!—
Wherein the tempest-beaten heart might ride
Sometimes at peaceful anchor, and abide
Where those that loved me touched me with their hands,
And looked upon me with glad eyes, and slipped
Smooth fingers o'er my brow, and lulled the strands
Of my wild tresses, as they backward tipped
My yearning face and kissed it satisfied.
Then bitterly I murmured as before,—
"He called her in from me and shut the door!"

III.

He called her in from me and shut the door!
After long struggling with my pride and pain—
A weary while it seemed, in which the more
I held myself from her, the greater fain
Was I to look upon her face again;—
At last—at last—half conscious where my feet
Were faring, I stood waist-deep in the sweet
Green grasses there where she

First came to me.—
The very blossoms she had plucked that day,
And, at her father's voice, had cast away,
Around me lay,
Still bright and blooming in these eyes of mine;
And as I gathered each one eagerly,
I pressed it to my lips and drank the wine
Her kisses left there for the honey-bee.
Then, after I had laid them with the tress
Of her bright hair with lingering tenderness,
I, turning, crept on to the hedge that bound
Her pleasant-seeming home—but all around
Was never sign of her!—The windows all
Were blinded; and I heard no rippling fall
Of her glad laugh, nor any harsh voice call;—
But, clutching to the tangled grasses, caught
A sound as though a strong man bowed his head
And sobbed alone—unloved—uncomforted!—
And then straightway before
My tearless eyes, all vividly, was wrought
A vision that is with me evermore:—
A little girl that lies asleep, nor hears
Nor heeds not any voice nor fall of tears.—
And I sit singing o'er and o'er and o'er,—
"God called her in from him and shut the door!"

THE BOY-FRIEND.

CLARENCE, my boy-friend, hale and strong!
O he is as jolly as he is young;
And all of the laughs of the lyre belong
To the boy all unsung:

So I want to sing something in his behalf—
To clang some chords, for the good it is
To know he is near, and to have the laugh
Of that wholesome voice of his.

I want to tell him in gentler ways
Than prose may do, that the arms of rhyme,
Warm and tender with tuneful praise,
Are about him all the time.

I want him to know that the quietest nights
We have passed together are yet with me,
Roistering over the old delights
That were born of his company.

I want him to know how my soul esteems
The fairy stories of Andersen,
And the glad translations of all the themes
Of the hearts of boyish men.

Want him to know that my fancy flows,
With the lilt of a dear old-fashioned tune,
Through "Lewis Carroll's" poemly prose,
And the tale of "The Bold Dragoon."

O this is the Prince that I would sing—
Would drape and garnish in velvet line,
Since courtlier far than any king
Is this brave boy-friend or mine.

WHEN THE WORLD BU'STS THROUGH.

[Casually Suggested By An Earthquake.]

WHERE'S a boy a-goin',
An' what's he goin' to do,
An' how's he goin' to do it,
When the world bu'sts through?
Ma she says "she can't tell
What we're comin' to!"
An' Pop says "he's ist skeered
Clean—plum'—through!

S'pose we'd be a-playin'
Out in the street,
An' the ground 'ud split up
'Bout forty feet!—
Ma says "she ist knows
We 'ud tumble in;"
An' Pop says, "he bets you
Nen we wouldn't grin!"

S'pose we'd ist be 'tendin'
Like we had a show,
Down in the stable
Where we mustn' go,—
Ma says, "the earthquake
Might make it fall;"
An' Pop says, "More'n like
Swaller barn an' all!"

Landy! ef we both wuz
Runnin' 'way from school,
Out in the shady woods
Where it's all so cool!—
Ma says "a big tree
Might sqush our head;"
An' Pop says, "Chop 'em out
Both—killed—dead!"

But where's a boy 'goin',
An' what's he goin' to do,
An' how's he goin' to do it,
Ef the world bu'sts through!—
Ma she says, "she can't tell
What we're comin' to!"
An' Pop says, "He's ist skeered
Clean—plum'—through!"

A PROSPECTIVE GLIMPSE.

JANEY Pettibone's the best
Little girl an' purtiest
In this town! an' lives next door,
Up stairs over their old store.

Little Janey Pettibone
An' her Ma lives all alone,—
'Cause her Pa broke up, an' nen
Died 'cause they aint rich again.

Little Janey's Ma she sews
Fer my Ma sometimes, an' goes
An' gives music-lessuns, where
People's got pianers there.

But when Janey Pettibone
Grows an' grows, like I'm a growin',
Nen *I'm* go' to keep a store,
An' sell things—an' sell some more—

Till I'm ist as rich!—An' nen
Her Ma can be rich again,—
Ef *I'm* rich enough to own
Little Janey Pettibone!

THE OLD TRAMP.

A' OLD Tramp slep' in our stable wunst,
An' The Raggedy Man he caught
An' roust him up, an' chased him off
Clean out through our back lot!

An' th' old tramp hollered back an' said,—
"You're a *purty* man!—*You* air!—
With a pair o' eyes like two fried eggs,
An' a nose like a Bartlutt pear!"

CURLY LOCKS.

CURLY Locks! Curly Locks! wilt thou be mine?
Thou shalt not wash the dishes, nor yet feed the swine,—
But sit on a cushion and sew a fine seam,
And feast upon strawberries, sugar and cream.

Curly Locks! Curly Locks! wilt thou be mine?
The throb of my heart is in every line,
And the pulse of a passion as airy and glad
In its musical beat as the little Prince had!

Thou shalt not wash the dishes, nor yet feed the swine!—
O I'll dapple thy hands with these kisses of mine
Till the pink of the nail of each finger shall be
As a little pet blush in full blossom for me.

But sit on a cushion and sew a fine seam,
And thou shalt have fabric as fair as a dream,—
The red of my veins, and the white of my love,
And the gold of my joy for the braiding thereof.

And feast upon strawberries, sugar and cream
From a service of silver, with jewels agleam,—
At thy feet will I bide, at thy beck will I rise,
And twinkle my soul in the night of thine eyes!

Curly Locks! Curly Locks! wilt thou be mine?
Thou shalt not wash the dishes, nor yet feed the swine,—
But sit on a cushion and sew a fine seam,
And feast upon strawberries, sugar and cream.

THE PET COON.

NOEY Bixler ketched him, and fetched him in to me
When he's ist a little teenty-weenty baby-coon
'Bout as big as little pups, an' tied him to a tree;
An' Pa gived Noey fifty cents, when he come home at noon.
Nen he buyed a chain fer him, an' little collar, too,
An' sawed a hole in a' old tub an' turnt it upside down;
An' little feller'd stay in there and wo'nt come out fer you—
'Tendin' like he's kindo' skeered o' boys 'at lives in town.

Now he aint afeard a bit! he's ist so fat an' tame,
We on'y chain him up at night, to save the little chicks.
Holler "Greedy! Greedy!" to him, an' he knows his name,
An' here he'll come a-waddle-un, up fer any tricks!
He'll climb up my leg, he will, an' wailer in my lap,
An' poke his little black paws 'way in my pockets where
They's beechnuts, er chinkypins, er any little scrap
Of anything 'at's good to eat—an' *he* don't care!

An' he's as spunky as you please, an' don't like dogs at all.—
Billy Miller's black-an'-tan tackled him one day,
An' "Greedy" he ist kindo' doubled all up like a ball,
An' Billy's dog he gived a yelp er two an' runned away!

An' nen when Billy fighted me, an' hit me with a bone,
An' Ma she purt'nigh ketched him as he dodged an' skooted thro'
The fence, she says, "You better let my little boy alone,
Er 'Greedy', next he whips yer dog, shall whip you,too!"

A NONSENSE RHYME.

RINGLETY-Jing!
And what will we sing?
Some little crinkety-crankety thing
That rhymes and chimes,
And skips, sometimes,
As though wound up with a kink in the spring.

Grunkety-krung!
And chunkety-plung!
Sing the song that the bull-frog sung,—
A song of the soul
O a mad tadpole
That met his fate in a leaky bowl:
And it's O for the first false wiggle he made
In a sea of pale pink lemonade!
And it's O for the thirst
Within him pent,
And the hopes that burst
As his reason went—
When his strong arm failed and his strength was spent!

Sing, O sing!
Of the things that cling,
And the claws that clutch and the fangs that sting—
Till the tadpole's tongue

And his tail upflung
Quavered and failed with a song unsung!
O the dank despair in the rank morass,
Where the cray-fish crouch in the cringing grass,
And the long limp rune of the loon wails on
For the mad, sad soul
Of a bad tadpole
Forever lost and gone!

Jinglety-Jee!
And now we'll see
What the last of the lay shall be,
As the dismal tip of the tune, O friends,
Swoons away and the long tale ends.
And it's O and alack!
For the tangled legs
And the spangled back
Of the green grig's eggs,
And the unstrung strain
Of the strange refrain
That the winds wind up like a strand of rain!

And it's O,
Also,
For the ears wreathed low,
Like a laurel-wreath on the lifted brow
Of the frog that chants of the why and how,

And the wherefore too, and the thus and so
Of the wail he weaves in a woof of woe!
Twangle, then, with your wrangling strings,
The tinkling links of a thousand things!
And clang the pang of a maddening moan
Till the Echo, hid in a land unknown,
Shall leap as he hears, and hoot and hoo
Like the wretched wraith of a Whoopty-Doo!

NAUGHTY CLAUDE.

WHEN Little Claude was naughty wunst
At dinner-time, an' said
He wo'nt say "*Thank you*" to his Ma,
She maked him go to bed
An' stay two hours an' not git up,—
So when the clock struck Two,
Nen Claude says,—"Thank you, Mr. Clock,
I'm much obleeged to you!"

THE OLD, OLD WISH.

LAST night, in some lost mood of meditation,
The while my dreamy vision ranged the far
Unfathomable arches of creation,
I saw a falling star:

And as my eyes swept round the path it embered
With the swift-dying glory of its glow,
With sudden intuition I remembered
A wish of long ago—

A wish that, were it made—so ran the fancy
Of credulous young lover and of lass—
As fell a star, by some strange necromancy,
Would surely come to pass.

And, of itself, the wish, reiterated
A thousand times in youth, flashed o'er my brain,
And, like the star, as soon obliterated,
Dropped into night again.

For my old heart had wished for the unending
Devotion of a little maid of nine—
And that the girl-heart, with the woman's blending,
Might be forever mine.

And so it was, with eyelids raised, and weighty
With ripest clusterings of sorrow's dew,
I cried aloud through heaven: "O little Katie!
When will my wish come true?"

"THE PREACHER'S BOY."

I rickollect the little tad, back, years and years ago—
"The Preacher's Boy" that everyone despised and hated so!
A meek-faced little feller, with white eyes and foxy hair,
And a look like he expected ser'ous trouble everywhere:
A sort o' fixed expression of suspicion in his glance;
His bare-feet always scratched with briers; and green stains
on his pants;
Molasses marks along his sleeves; his cap-rim turned behind—
And so it is the "Preacher's Boy" is brought again to mind!

My fancy even brings the sly marauder back so plain,
I see him jump our garden-fence and slip off down the lane;
And I seem to holler at him and git back the old reply:
"Oh, no: your peaches is too green fer such a worm as I!"
For he scorned his father's phrases—every holy one he had—
"As good a man," folks put it, "as that boy of his was bad!"
And again from their old buggy-shed, I hear the "rod unspared"—
Of course that never "spoiled the child" for which nobody cared!

If any neighbor ever found his gate without a latch,
Or rines around the edges of his watermelon patch;
His pasture-bars left open; or his pump-spout chocked with clay,
He'd swear 'twas "that infernal Preacher's Boy," right away!
When strings was stretched acrost the street at night, and some one got
An everlastin' tumble, and his nose broke, like as not,
And laid it on "The Preacher's Boy"—no powers lowner high,
Could ever quite substantiate that boy's alibi!

And did *nobody* like the boy?—Well, all the *pets* in town
Would eat out of his fingers; and canaries would come down
And leave their swingin' perches and their fishbone jist to pick
The little warty knuckles that the dogs would leap to lick.—
No little snarlin', snappin' fiste but what would leave his bone
To foller, ef *he* whistled, in that tantalizin' tone
That made the goods-box whittler blasphemeusly protest
"He couldn't tell, 'twixt dog and boy, which one was ornriest!"

'Twas such a little cur as this, onc't, when the crowd was thick
Along the streets, a drunken corner-loafer tried to kick,
When a sudden foot behind him tripped him up, and falling so
He "marked his man," and jerked his gun—drawed up and let 'er go!

And the crowd swarmed round the victim—holding close against his breast
The little dog unharmed, in arms that still, as they caressed,
Grew rigid in their last embrace, as with a smile of joy
He recognized the dog was saved. So died the "Preacher's Boy!"

When it appeared, before the 'Squire, that fatal pistol-ball
Was fired at "a dangerous beast," and not the boy at all,
And the facts set forth established,—it was like-befittin' then
To order out a possy of the "city councilmen"
To kill *the dog* ! But, strange to tell, they searched the country round,
And never hide-ner-hair of that "said" dog was ever found!
And, somehow, *then* I sort o' thought—and halfway think, *to-day*—
The spirit of "The Preacher's Boy" had whistled him away.

AN IMPETUOUS RESOLVE.

WHEN little Dickie Swope's a man,
He's go' to be a Sailor;
An' little Hamey Tincher, he's
A-go' to be a Tailor:
Bud Mitchell, he's a-go' to be
A stylish Carriage-Maker;
An' when *I* grow a grea'-big man,
I'm go' to be a Baker!

An' Dick'll buy his sailor-suit
O' Hame; an' Hame'll take it
An' buy as fine a double-rigg
As ever Bud can make it:
An' nen all three'll drive roun' fer me,
An' we'll drive off togevver,
A-slingin' pie-crust 'long the road
Ferever an' ferever!

A SUDDEN SHOWER.

BAREFOOTED boys scud up the street,
Or skurry under sheltering sheds;
And schoolgirl faces, pale and sweet,
Gleam from the shawls about their heads.

Doors bang; and mother-voices call
From alien homes; and rusty gates
Are slammed; and high above it all,
The thunder grim reverberates.

And then, abrupt,—the rain! the rain!—
The earth lies gasping; and the eyes
Behind the streaming window-pane
Smile at the trouble of the skies.

The highway smokes; sharp echoes ring;
The cattle bawl and cowbells clank;
And into town comes galloping
The farmer's horse, with steaming flank.

The swallow dips beneath the eaves,
And flirts his plumes and folds his wings;
And under the catawba leaves
The caterpillar curls and clings.

The bumble-bee is pelted down
    The wet stem of the hollyhock;
And sullenly, in spattered brown,
    The cricket leaps the garden walk.

Within, the baby claps his hands
    And crows with rapture strange and vague;
Without, beneath the rosebush stands
    A dripping rooster on one leg.

THE HUNTER BOY.

HUNTER Boy of Hazelwood—
Happier than Robin Hood!
Dance across the green, and stand
Suddenly, with lifted hand
Shading eager eyes, and be
Thus content to capture me!—
Cease thy quest for wilder prey
Than my willing heart to-day!

Hunter Boy! with belt and bow,
Bide with me, or let me go,
An thou wilt, in wake of thee,
Questing for mine infancy!
With thy glad face in the sun,
Let thy laughter over-run
Thy ripe lips, until mine own
Answer, ringing, tone for tone!

O My Hunter! tilt the cup
Of thy silver bugle up,
And like wine pour out for me
All its limpid melody!
Pout thy happy lips and blare
Music's kisses everywhere—
Whiff o'er forest, field and town,
Tufts of tune like thistledown!
O to go, as once I could,
Hunter Boy of Hazelwood!

THE MAN IN THE MOON.

SAID the Raggedy Man, on a hot afternoon·
My!
Sakes!
What a lot o' mistakes
Some little folks makes on The Man in the Moon!
But people that's b'en up to *see* him, like *me*,
And calls on him frequent and intimutly,
Might drop a few facts that would interest you
Clean!
Through!—
If you wanted 'em to—
Some *actual* facts that might interest you!

O The Man in the Moon has a crick in his back;
Whee!
Whimm!
Aint you sorry for him?
And a mole on his nose that is purple and black;
And his eyes are so weak that they water and run
If he dares to *dream* even he looks at the sun,—
So he jes' dreams of stars, as the doctors advise—
My!
Eyes!
But isn't he wise—
To jes' dream of stars, as the doctors advise?

And the Man in the Moon has a boil on his ear—
Whee!
Whing!
What a singular thing!
I know! but these facts are authentic, my dear,—
There's a boil on his ear; and a corn on his chin—
He calls it a dimple—but dimples stick in—
Yet it might be a dimple turned over, you know!
Whang!
Ho!
Why, certainly so!—
It might be a dimple turned over, you know!

And The Man in the Moon has a rheumatic knee—
Gee!
Whizz!
What a pity that is!
And his toes have worked round where his heels ought to be.—
So whenever he wants to go North he goes *South*,
And comes back with porridge-crumbs all round his mouth,
And he brushes them off with a Japanese fan,
Whing!
Whann!
What a marvelous man!
What a very remarkably marvelous man!

And the Man in the Moon, sighed The Raggedy Man!
Gits!
So!
Sullonesome, you know,—
Up there by hisse'f sence creation began!—
That when I call on him and then come away,
He grabs me and holds me and begs me to stay,—
Till—*Well!* if it wasn't fer *Jimmy-cum-jim*,
Dadd!
Limb!
I'd go pardners with him—
Jes' jump my job here and be pardners with *him!*

A CHILD'S HOME—LONG AGO.

EVEN as the gas-flames flicker to and fro,
The Old Man's wavering fancies leap and glow,—
As o'er the vision, like a mirage, falls
The old log cabin with its dingy walls,
And crippled chimney with its crutch-like prop
Beneath a sagging shoulder at the top:
The coon-skin battened fast on either side—
The wisps of leaf-tobacco—"cut-and-dried;"
The yellow strands of quartered apples, hung
In rich festoons that tangle in among
The morning-glory vines that clamber o'er
The little clap-board roof above the door:
The old well-sweep that drops a courtesy
To every thristing soul so graciously,
The stranger, as he drains the dripping gourd,
Intuitively murmurs, "Thank the Lord!"
Again through mists of memory arise
The simple scenes of home before the eyes:—
The happy mother, humming, with her wheel,
The dear old melodies that used to steal
So drowsily upon the summer air,
The house-dog hid his bone, forgot his care,
And nestled at her feet, to dream, perchance,
Some cooling dream of wintertime romance:

The square of sunshine thro' the open door
That notched its edge across the puncheon floor,
And made a golden coverlet whereon
The god of slumber had a picture drawn
Of Babyhood, in all the loveliness
Of dimpled cheek and limb and linsey dress:
The bough-filled fire-place, and the mantel wide,
Its fire-scorched ankles stretched on either side,
Where, perched upon its shoulders 'neath the joist,
The old clock hiccoughed, harsh and husky-voiced,
And snarled the premonition, dire and dread,
When it should hammer Time upon the head:
Tomatoes, red and yellow, in a row,
Preserved not then for diet, but for show,—
Like rare and precious jewels in the rough
Whose worth was not appraised at half enough:
The jars of jelly, with their dusty tops;
The bunch of pennyroyal; the cordial drops;
The flask of camphor, and the vial of squills,
The box of buttons, garden-seeds, and pills;
And, ending all the mantel's bric-a-brac,
The old,time-honored "Family Almanack."
And memory, with a mother's touch of love,
Climbs with us to the dusky loft above,
Where drowsily we trail our fingers in
The mealy treasures of the harvest bin;
And, feeling with our hands the open track,

We pat the bag of barley on the back;
And, groping onward through the mellow gloom,
We catch the hidden apple's faint perfume,
And, mingling with it, fragrant hints of pear
And musky melon ripening somewhere.
Again we stretch our limbs upon the bed
Where first our simple childish prayers were said;
And while, without, the gallant cricket trills
A challange to the solemn whippoorwills,
And, filing on the chorus with his glee,
The katydid whets all the harmony
To feather-edge of incoherent song,
We drop asleep, and peacefully along
The current of our dreams we glide away
To the dim harbor of another day.

BILLY GOODIN'.

LOOK so neat an' sweet in all yer frills an' fancy pleatin'!
Better shet yer kitchen, though, afore you go to Meetin'!—
Better hide yer mince-meat an' stewed fruit an' plums!
Better hide yer pound-cake an' bresh away the crumbs!
Better hide yer cubbord-key when Billy Goodin' comes,
A-eatin'! an' a-eatin! an' a-eatin'!

Sight o' Sund'y-doin's done 'at aint done in Meetin'!
Sun acrost yer garden-patch a-pourin' an' a-beatin';
Meller apples drappin' in the weeds an' roun' the groun'—
Cling-stones an' sugar-pears a-ist a-plunkin' down!—
Better kindo' comb the grass 'fore Billy comes aroun',
A-eatin'! an' a-eatin'! an' a-eatin'!

Billy Goodin' ain't a-go' to go to any Meetin'!
We all watch an' ketch an' give the little sneak a beatin'!—
Better hint *we* wanto stay'n' snoop yer grapes an' plums!
Better eat 'em all yerse'f an' suck yer stingy thumbs!—
Won't be nothin' anyhow when Billy Goodin' comes!—
A-eatin'! an' a-eatin'! an' a-eatin'!

A PASSING HAIL.

LET us rest ourselves a bit!
Worry!—wave your hand to it—
Kiss your finger-tips, and smile
It farewell a little while.

Weary of the weary way
We have come from Yesterday,
Let us fret us not, instead,
Of the weary way ahead.

Let us pause and catch our breath
On the hither side of death,
While we see the tender shoots
Of the grasses—not the roots.—

While we yet look down—not up—
To seek out the buttercup
And the daisy where they wave
O'er the green home of the grave.

Let us launch us smoothly on
The soft billows of the lawn,
And drift out across the main
Of our childish dreams again:

Voyage off, beneath the trees,
O'er the field's enchanted seas,
Where the lilies are our sails,
And our seagulls, nightingales:

Where no wilder storm shall beat
Than the wind that waves the wheat,
And no tempest-burst above
The old laughs we used to love:

Lose all troubles—gain release,
Languor, and exceeding peace,
Cruising idly o'er the vast,
Calm mid-ocean of the Past.

Let us rest ourselves a bit!
Worry!—wave your hand to it—
Kiss your finger-tips, and smile
It farewell a little while.

PRIOR TO MISS BELLE'S APPEARANCE.

WHAT makes you come *here* fer, Mister,
So much to *our* house?—*Say?*
Come to see our big sister!—
An' Charley he says 'at you kissed her
An' he ketched you, thuther day!—
Didn' you, Charley?—But we p'omised Belle
An' crossed our heart to never to tell—
'Cause *she* gived us some o' them-er
Chawk'lut-drops 'at you bringed to her!

Charley he's my little b'uther—
An' we has a-mostest fun,
Don't we, Charley?—Our Muther,
Whenever we whips one-anuther,
Tries to whip *us*—an' we *run*—
Don't we, Charley?—An' nen, bime-by,
Nen she gives us cake—an' pie—
Don't she, Charley?—when we come in
An' p'omise never to do it agin!

He's named Charley.—I'm *Willie*—
An' I'm got the purtiest name!
But Uncle Bob *he* calls me "Billy"—
Don't he Charley?—'Nour filly

We named "Billy," the same
Ist like me! An' our Ma said
'At "Bob puts foolishnuss into our head!"—
Didn' she, Charley?—An' *she* don't know
Much about *boys!*—'Cause Bob said so!

Baby's a funniest feller!
Naint no hair on his head—
Is they, Charley? It's meller
Wite up there! An' ef Belle er
Us ask wuz *we* that way, Ma said,—
"Yes; an' yer *Pa's* head wuz soft as that,
An' its that way yet!"—An' Pa grabs his hat
An' says, "Yes, childern, she's right about Pa—
'Cause that's the reason he married yer Ma!"

An' our Ma says 'at "Belle couldn'
Ketch nothin' at all but ist *'bows!* "—
An' *Pa* says 'at "you're soft as puddun!"—
An' *Uncle Bob* says "you're a good-un—
'Cause he can tell by yer nose?"—
Didn' he, Charley? An' when Belle'll play
In the poller on th' pianer, some day,
Bob makes up funny songs about you,
Till she gits mad—like he wants her to!

Our sister *Fanny* she's '*leven*
Years old! 'At's mucher 'an *I*—
Aint it, Charley?....I'm seven!—
But our sister Fanny's in *Heaven!*
Nere's where you go ef you die!—
Don't you, Charley? Nen you has *wings*—
Ist like Fanny!—an' *purtiest things!*—
Don't you, Charley? An' nen you can *fly*—
Ist fly—an' *ever*'thing!....Wisht *I'd* die!

SPRITE SERENADE.

LINGER, my Dwainie! Dwainie, lily-fair,
Stay yet thy step upon the casement-stair—
Poised be thy slipper-tip as is the tine
Of some still star.—Ah, Dwainie—Dwainie mine,
Yet linger—linger there!

Thy face, O Dwainie, lily-pure and fair,
Gleams i' the dusk, as in thy dusky hair
The moony zhoomer glimmers, or the shine
Of thy swift smile.—Ah, Dwainie—Dwainie mine,
Yet linger—linger there!

With lifted wrist, whereround the laughing air
Hath blown a mist of lawn and claspt it there,
Waft finger-thipt adieus that spray the wine
Of thy waste kisses to'rd me, Dwainie mine—
Yet linger—linger there!

What unloosed splendor is there may compare
With thy hand's unfurled glory, anywhere?
What glint of dazzling dew or jewel fine
May mate thine eyes?—Ah, Dwainie—Dwainie mine!
Yet linger—linger there!

My soul confronts thee: On thy brow and hair
It lays its tenderness like palms of prayer—
It touches sacredly those lips of thine
And swoons across thy spirit, Dwainie mine,
The while thou lingerest there.

A LIFE-LESSON.

THERE! little girl; don't cry!
They have broken your doll, I know;
And your tea-set blue,
And your play-house, too,
Are things of the long ago;
But childish troubles will soon pass by.—
There! little girl; don't cry!

There! little girl; don't cry!
They have broken your slate, I know;
And the glad, wild ways
Of your school-girl days
Are things of the long ago;
But life and love will soon come by.—
There! little girl; don't cry!

There! little girl; don't cry!
They have broken your heart, I know;
And the rainbow gleams
Of your youthful dreams
Are things of the long ago;
But Heaven holds all for which you sigh.—
There! little girl; don't cry!

HONEY DRIPPING FROM THE COMB.

HOW slight a thing may set one's fancy drifting
Upon the dead sea of the Past!—A view—
Sometimes an odor—or a rooster lifting
A far-off "*Ooh! ooh-ooh!*"

And suddenly we find ourselves astray
In some wood's-pasture of the Long Ago—
Or idly dream again upon a day
Of rest we used to know.

I bit an apple but a moment since—
A wilted apple that the worm had spurned,—
Yet hidden in the taste were happy hints
Of good old days returned.—

And so my heart, like some enraptured lute,
Tinkles a tune so tender and complete,
God's blessing must be resting on the fruit—
So bitter, yet so sweet!

IN SWIMMING-TIME.

CLOUDS above, as white as wool,
Drifting over skies as blue
As the eyes of beautiful
Children when they smile at you:
Groves of maple, elm, and beech,
With the sunshine sifted through
Branches, mingling each with each,
Dim with shade and bright with dew.

Stripling trees, and poplars hoar,
Hickory and sycamore,
And the drowsy dogwood, bowed
Where the ripples laugh aloud,
And the crooning creek is stirred
To a gaiety that now
Mates the warble of the bird
Teetering on the hazel-bough.

Grasses long and fine and fair
As your schoolboy-sweetheart's hair
Backward stroked and twirled and twined
By the fingers of the wind:
Vines and mosses interlinked

Down dark aisles and deep ravines,
Where the stream runs, willow-brinked,
Round a bend where some one leans,
Faint, and vague, and indistinct
As the like-reflected thing
In the current shimmering.

Childish voices, further on,
Where the truant stream has gone,
Vex the echoes of the wood
Till no word is understood—
Save that we are well aware
Happiness is hiding there:—
There, in leafy coverts, nude
Little bodies poise and leap,
Spattering the solitude
And the silence, everywhere—
Mimic monsters of the deep!—
Wallowing in sandy shoals—
Plunging headlong out of sight,
And, with spurtings of delight,
Clutching hands, and slippery soles,
Climbing up the treacherous steep,
Over which the spring-board spurns
Each again as he returns!

Ah! the glorious carnival!
Purple lips—and chattering teeth—
Eyes that burn—But, in beneath,
Every care beyond recall—
Every task forgotten quite—
And again in dreams at night,
Dropping, drifting through in all!

SHE "DISPLAINS" IT.

"HAD, TOO!"
"*Hadn't, neither!*"
So contended Bess and May—
Neighbor children, who were boasting
Of their grandmammas, one day.

"Had, too!"
"Hadn't, neither!"
All the difference begun
By May's saying she'd *two* grandmas,
While poor Bess had only one.

"Had, too!"
"Hadn't, neither!"
Tossing curls, and kinks of friz!—
"How could you have *two* gran'muvvers
When ist *one* is all they is?"

"Had, too!"
"Hadn't, neither!—
'Cause ef you had *two*," said Bess,
"You'd *displain* it!" Then May answered,
"*My* gran'mas wuz *twins*, I guess!"

THE WAY THE BABY SLEPT.

THIS is the way the baby slept:
A mist of tresses backward thrown
By quavering sighs where kisses crept
With yearnings she had never known:
The little hands were closely kept
About a lily newly blown—
And God was with her. And we wept.—
And this is the way the baby slept.

THE JOLLY MILLER.

[Restored Romaunt.]

IT was a Jolly Miller lived on the River Dee;
He looked upon his piller, and there he found a flea:
"O Mr. Flea! you have bit' me,
And you shall shorely die!"
So he scrunched his bones aginst the stones—
And there he let him lie!

'Twas then the Jolly Miller he laughed and told his wife,
And *she* laughed fit to kill her, and dropped her carvin'-knife!—
"O Mr. Flea!" "Ho-ho!" "Tee-hee!"
They *both* laughed fit to kill,
Until the sound did almost drownd
The rumble of the mill!

"*Laugh on, my Jolly Miller! and Missus Miller, too!—*
But there's a weeping-willer will soon wave over you!"
The voice was all so awful small—
So very small and slim!—
He durst' infer that it was her,
Ner her infer 'twas him!

That night the Jolly Miller, says he, "Its Wifey dear,
That cat o' yourn, I'd kill her!—her actions is so queer,—
She rubbin' 'ginst the grindstone-legs,
And yowlin' at the sky—
And I 'low the moon haint greener
Than the yaller of her eye!"

And as the Jolly Miller went chuckle-un to bed,
Was *Somepin* jerked his piller from underneath his head!
"O Wife," says he, on-easi-lee,
"Fetch here that lantern there!"
But *Somepin* moans in thunder tones,
"*You tetch it ef you dare!*"

'Twas then the Jolly Miller he trimbled and he quailed—
And his wife choked until her breath come back, 'n' she *wailed!*
And "*O!*" cried she, "it is *the Flea*,
All white and pale and wann—
He's got you in his clutches, and
He's bigger than a man!"

"*Ho! ho! my Jolly Miller*," *(fer 'twas the Flea, fer shore!)*
"*I reckon you'll not rack my bones ner scrunch 'em any more!*"
And then *the Ghost* he grabbed him clos't,
With many a ghastly smile,
And from the doorstep stooped and hopped
About four hunderd mile!

WITH THE CURRENT.

RAREST mood of all the year!
Aimless, idle, and content—
Sky and wave and atmosphere
Wholly indolent.

Little daughter, loose the band
From your tresses—let them pour
Shadow-like o'er arm and hand
Idling at the oar.

Low and clear, and pure and deep,
Ripples of the river sing—
Water-lilies, half asleep,
Drowsed with listening.

Tremulous reflex of skies—
Skies above and skies below,—
Paradise and Paradise
Blending even so!

Blossoms with their leaves unrolled
Laughingly, as they were lips
Cleft with ruddy beaten gold
Tongues of pollen-tips.

Rush and reed, and thorn and vine,
Clumped with grasses lithe and tall—
With a web of summer-shine
Woven round it all.

Back and forth and to and fro—
Flashing scale and wing as one,—
Dragonflies that come and go,
Shuttled by the sun.

Fairy lilts and lullabies,
Fine as phantasy conceives—
Echoes wrought of cricket-cries
Sifted through the leaves.

O'er the rose, with drowsy buzz,
Hangs the bee, and stays his kiss,
Even as my fancy does,
Gypsy, over this.

Let us both be children—share
Youth's glad voyage night and day,
Drift adown it, half aware,
Anywhere we may.—

Drift and curve and deviate,
Veer and eddy, float and flow,
Waver, swerve and undulate,
As the bubbles go.

A SLEEPING BEAUTY.

I.

AN alien wind that blew and blew
Over the fields where the ripe grain grew,

Sending ripples of shine and shade
That crept and crouched at her feet and played.

The sea-like summer washed the moss
Till the sun-drenched lilies hung like floss,

Draping the throne of green and gold
That lulled her there like a queen of old.

II.

Was it the hum of a bumble-bee,
Or the long-hushed bugle eerily

Winding a call to the daring Prince
Lost in the wood long ages since?—

A dim old wood, with a palace rare
Hidden away in its depths somewhere!

Was it the Princess, tranced in sleep,
Awaiting her lover's touch to leap

Into the arms that bent above?—
To thaw his heart with the breath of love—

And cloy his lips, through her waking tears,
With the dead-ripe kiss of a hundred years!

III.

An alien wind that blew and blew.—
I had blurred my eyes as the artists do,

Coaxing life to a half-sketched face,
Or dreaming bloom for a grassy place.

The bee droned on in an undertone;
And a shadow-bird trailed all alone

Across the wheat, while a liquid cry
Dripped from above, as it went by.

What to her was the far-off whir
Of the quail's quick wing or the chipmunk's chirr?—

What to her was the shade that slid
Over the hill where the reapers hid?—

Or what the hunter, with one foot raised,
As he turned to go—yet, pausing, gazed?

AT AUNTY'S HOUSE.

ONE time, when we's at Aunty's house—
'Way in the country!—where
They's ist but woods—an' pigs, an' cows—
An' all's out-doors an' air!—
An' orchurd-swing; an' churry-trees—
An' *churries* in 'em!—Yes, an' these-
Here red-head birds steals all they please,
An' tetch 'em ef you dare!—
W'y, wunst, one time, when we wuz there,
We et out on the porch!

Wite where the cellar-door wuz shut
The table wuz; an' I
Let Aunty set by me an' cut
My vittuls up—an' pie.
'Tuz awful funny!—I could see
The red-heads in the churry-tree;
An' bee-hives, where you got to be
So keerful, goin' by;—
An' "Comp'ny" there an' all!—an' we—
We et out on the porch!

An' I ist et *p'surves* an' things
'At Ma don't 'low me to—
An' *chickun-gizzurds*—(don't like *wings*
Like *Parunts* does! do *you*?)
An' all the time, the wind blowed there,
An' I could feel it in my hair,
An' ist smell clover *ever*'where!—
An' a' old red-head flew
Purt' nigh wite over my high-chair,
When we et on the porch!

THE WHITHERAWAYS.

[Set Sail, Oct. 15, 1890.]

THE Whitheraways!—That's what I'll have to call
You—sailing off, with never word at all
Of parting!—sailing 'way across the sea,
With never one good-bye to *me*—to ME!

Sailing away from me, with no farewell!—
Ah, Parker Hitt and sister Muriel—
And Rodney, too, and little Laurance—all
Sailing away—just as the leaves, this Fall!

Well, then, *I* too shall sail on cheerily
As now you all go sailing o'er the sea:
I've *other* little friends with me on shore—
Though they but make me yearn for *you* the more!

And so, sometime, dear little friends afar,
When this faint voice shall reach you, and you are
All just a little homesick, you must be
As brave as I am now, and think of me!

Or, haply, if your eyes, as mine, droop low,
And would be humored with a tear or so,—
Go to your *Parents*, Children!—let *them* do
The *crying*—'twill be easier for them to!

ENVOY.

MANY pleasures of Youth have been buoyantly sung—
And, borne on the winds of delight, may they beat
With their palpitant wings at the hearts of the Young,
And in bosoms of Age find as warm a retreat!—
Yet sweetest of all of the musical throng,
Though least of the numbers that upward aspire,
Is the one rising now into wavering song,
As I sit in the silence and gaze in the fire.

'Tis a Winter long dead that beleaguers my door
And muffles his steps in the snows of the past:
And I see, in the embers I'm dreaming before,
Lost faces of love as they looked on me last:—
The round, laughing eyes of the desk-mate of old
Gleam out for a moment with truant desire—
Then fade and are lost in a City of Gold,
As I sit in the silence and gaze in the fire.

And then comes the face, peering back in my own,
Of a shy little girl, with her lids drooping low,
As she faltering tells, in a far-away tone,
The ghost of a story of long, long ago.—
Then her dewy blue eyes they are lifted again;
But I see their glad light slowly fail and expire,
As I reach and cry to her in vain, all in vain!—
As I sit in the silence and gaze in the fire.

Then the face of a Mother looks back, through the mist
Of the tears that are welling; and, lucent with light,
I see the dear smile of the lips I have kissed
As she knelt by my cradle at morning and night;
And my arms are outheld, with a yearning too wild
For any but God in His love to inspire,
As she pleads at the foot of His throne for her child,—
As I sit in the silence and gaze in the fire.

O pathos of rapture! O glorious pain!
My heart is a blossom of joy over-run
With a shower of tears, as a lily with rain
That weeps in the shadow and laughs in the sun.
The blight of the frost may descend on the tree,
And the leaf and the flower may fall and expire,
But ever and ever love blossoms for me,
As I sit in the silence and gaze in the fire.

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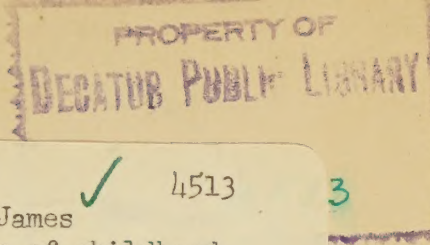

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